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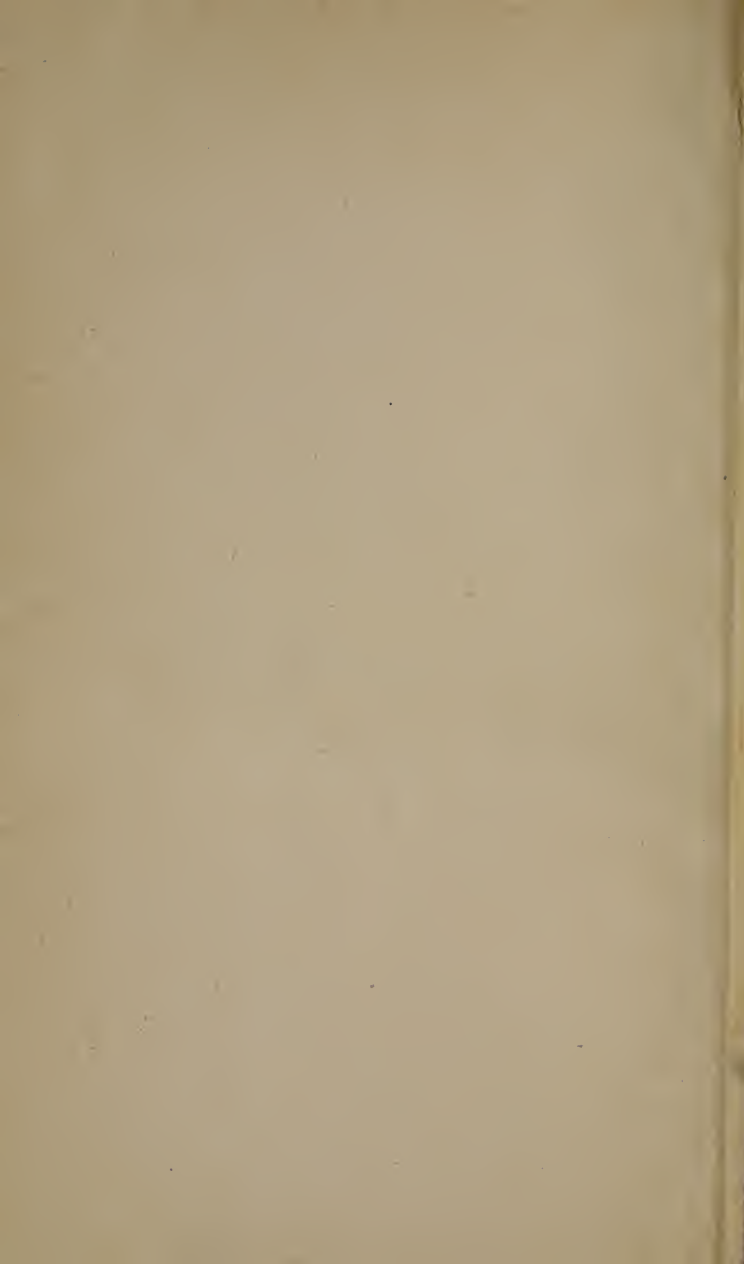
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FAMILY FAILINGS.

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A NOVEL

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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"I SAY, Luke, old fellow, can I ride your grey to Ravenswood to-day?" said a young man of five or six and twenty, as he entered the morning room in which his family were assembled.

“I want her myself, thank you,” replied his elder brother, as he stretched his awkward length in the most comfortable chair in the room, without even raising his eyes from under their black and overhanging brows.

With a good natured attempt to turn off his disappointment by a laugh, Horace Leigh was about to leave the room, when a thought stayed his progress.

“Only eleven I see ; I can have a day’s shooting, if you could spare the dogs and Bingley ?”

“ You can’t have them to-day ; I’m going out myself to-morrow,” was the answer, given, in so cool and quiet a manner, so quietly heard, that as the second brother left the room in acquiescence to this apparently unanswerable fiat ; it was evident that there was nothing new in this otherwise curious little scene.

Mr. Leigh himself never looked up from his paper, worthy old country gentleman as he was, he thought that his dear son Luke, from the mere fact of his having appeared in this world five years before his younger brother Horace, had an unlimited right to keep the best of everything to himself alone. It may be no uncommon thing to see this done in a way more or less veiled from sight ;

but unbounded indulgence from the Squire, who was too old to change his ways, or his opinions, which all favoured the heir to his two or three thousand a year in comfortable acres ; and a laughing submission on the part of young Horace, had brought the naturally coarse selfishness of the elder brother, to a rather remarkable height : and no one now, thought of interfering with his good will and pleasure.

Mr. Leigh went on with his paper, and Mrs. Leigh went on with her knitting, but by her side was sitting an old lady, whose kind looking brown eyes, had looked up in astonishment once and again, during the few words that had been spoken ; she was not surprised ; she had long and carefully studied the characters of the brothers ; but things were this time rather worse than usual, and she followed her nephew Horace, whose warm heart and quick wit had long won much favour in her eyes, with a look which boded no ill to his prospects for the future.

“Why can’t your brother shoot to-day?” said the old lady drily, “he won’t often take your dogs if he is going to town the day after to-morrow!”

“Oh Aunt, if you wish it, I’ll go and see about the matter, but if he goes out with me to-morrow, I don’t see why he can want to shoot to-day.”

“Pray don’t disturb yourself, for such a trifle as your brother’s amusement,” said his Aunt in a voice so different to her usual smooth and amiable tones that even the obtuse faculties of the son and heir discovered the audible sneer; and remembering how powerful a person was the quiet looking Mrs. Vernon, in the narrow circle of his home, he actually got up and left the fire.

Everything looked the same in that picturesque old oak room with its quaint pictures; Mrs. Vernon went on as before with her piece of worsted work, but her thoughts were busy with the past, and with the future, over which last she had no slight controul; for good or evil who might tell!

Everything was still and quiet as before, yet in her mind were working thoughts of those two young men, and before she spoke again those thoughts had ripened into a determination, which was their history.

She thought of the time so long ago, when she was herself comparatively young, when she first knew her nephews ; she remembered the clinging affection, the bold spirit and the tender heart of Horace Leigh, and she did not forget his brother's hugging closely all his playthings one and all, lest Horace should have one for a moment ; in this case, if ever, it was true, that the boy is father to the man. She thought of her boy, she had long called him to herself "her boy," winning his way at school and college with his keen wit and steady industry ; lording it elsewhere by his superior abilities, to be a mere cipher in his own home. She knew that he was hiding under his merry words a proud and sensitive heart, and she dreaded his fate as an unprovided younger brother.

The proverb says that "knowledge is

power," but who now living in our sordid times, who, but will own, "the might, the majesty of money?" that moral steam engine for which nothing is too small, nothing too great, nothing impossible.

Mrs. Vernon knew well, and gloried in the power of money; not for herself, her day of worldly ambition and worldly vanity was over, but for its power to shed upon the nephew she had loved for years, the many benefits of wealth.

Mr. Leigh of Leigh, and Mrs. Vernon were brother and sister; their father doted on his only daughter, and as much of his property was un-entailed, he had bestowed it on his darling girl; leaving only the Leigh itself to his son. Mrs. Vernon had married at an early age, and after a long and happy wedded life, embittered only by the death of three children, she found herself as a widow with the fine old place her husband had bought, and property including that, to the amount of nearly six thousand a year at her sole disposal; it was this little fact which

made her wishes of some weight to the selfish and indolent Luke Leigh : and it was the future destination of her thousands, which occupied the busy mind of the old lady as she sat mechanically working. Often of course she had been weighing these plans in the balance, but trifles have often an important influence upon our minds, and the little scene of the morning, decided her on her intended course.

“My dear brother,” began the old lady, “I am much pleased with your son.”

“Dear Luke !” replied the partial father.

“Dear Luke !” echoed good, simple Mrs. Leigh.

“I thought of Horace,” continued Mrs. Vernon, “and now that he will be at the bar, and on his own resources I intend, if it meet your approbation, of which I hope there is no doubt, I intend to allow him five hundred a year.”

“Thank you, my dear sister, that is really kind, but surely half of that would be

enough for him, a younger son, and Luke, dear fellow, really I can't supply him half enough with horses. Would not it be more impartial, perhaps, excuse me, more like your usual kind consideration, if you divided the sum you kindly purpose to devote to my poor boys—between the two?" and the good squire who seldom said so many words in a week, much less in a breath, became quite red in the face, with his exertions and his partiality.

Mrs. Vernon smiled, partly at the unwonted eloquence of his speech, and more at his appeal to her impartiality: but she looked down upon her brother's narrowness of mind while she admitted him to be both good and kind in his own way, and often thought he stood too much in awe of the superior mind of his young son, to love him as he would have done had he been made of coarser clay.

"Surely, dear Anne," echoed, as usual, Mrs. Leigh—"surely you would prefer—"

“ Having my own way, certainly,” interrupted the old lady ; “ I do prefer giving to Horace only, the sum I mentioned.”

“ But, my dear madam,” said the squire, who was getting much excited by the interesting subject of discussion, “ you must be aware that no man ever succeeded at the bar who had one farthing of his own.”

“ I have heard that ; but it matters little, in my opinion, whether Horace succeeds or not in his profession,” said Mrs. Vernon, in a cool tone of decision, which beyond all measure astonished her hearers.

“ Not signify !” exclaimed the squire, quite breathless with surprise.

“ His sole dependance, and no matter whether he succeeds or not !” exclaimed his wife, quite thunder-struck in a small way.

“ Not in the least, for it is my decided intention,” added the old lady, rising with an air of conscious power and dignity which was quite impressive—“ it is my fixed determination to make my nephew Horace Leigh my heir.”

Before the unwilling steps of Luke could reach the stables, his brother had started on a long and solitary walk, unconscious of the vast change in his prospects which that very hour was bringing about ; he was musing upon them in no hopeful mood. In spite of his cheerful submission to his elder brother, he did not feel the less that his tyranny was nearly insupportable ; but had he resented it, even during the vacations from school and college, the peace of the family would have been broken up, and the Leigh could not long have held them both ; for Luke's mere violence of temper which was a family failing, was as nothing compared to the power of sarcastic bitterness which nature had bestowed on Horace ; once that bitterness of angry wit had cost him the friendship of a valued companion ; and he had sternly determined not to give it scope again. As yet his sense and principle had kept his temper in controul, and to that, to that much repented loss, of a dear friend, may be attributed his forbearance

on many trying occasions; for though Horace possessed a heart capable of deep affection, there was nothing in his home to call it forth—so, young and gay as he was, he bore and forbore for conscience sake.

On his return from his silent and thoughtful walk he passed through the garden, and seeing Mrs. Vernon walking there alone, he joined her, and before long she had fully explained her intentions in his favour. The happiness of being raised at once from a state of painful dependance to competence now, and wealth hereafter, was fully felt by Horace, and he warmly expressed his gratitude.

“ My dearest aunt it is not easy for me to speak my thanks for this ; I have had many a carking care for the time to come. I could not hope much from my parents,” and he slightly hesitated, “ still less from Luke ; and although I had intended to devote myself in earnest to the Law, the Bar gives one so precarious a chance, that I have been

at times tempted to despair of anything like success——”

“Forgive me,” said the old lady interrupting him, “if I wish to shackle my gifts with one condition; I am proud of your talents, nephew Horace—promise me you will follow up your profession as if you still were poor.”

“I will,” gravely replied the heir-expectant, and he kept his word.

They were a very awkward party when they met at dinner time; the odds were greatly against Mrs. Vernon; she had made one happy—true; but she had disappointed three! Luke Leigh contrived to wish his brother joy, though without much sincerity in his face or tones; but the news had spread throughout the house, and on his way to his room at night Horace found his hand seized by Mrs. Thomas the old housekeeper, who sobbing out—“Oh, Mr. Horace, I’ve heard——” fairly burst into tears of joy at the good fortune of her young master,

till though he pished and pshawed, and laughed her off, it almost brought the moisture to his own eyes to know that one heart in his own home was gladdened by his happiness—and only one.

Three days from that memorable evening a small party was expected in a very elegant house in Grosvenor Square ; several young ladies were assembled about the large round table, in the centre of the room, which was covered with all the newest publications, reviews, everything that could amuse or furnish conversation. The large chair of Mr. Trevor, with his lamp and table, were placed ready with the papers of the day so that he might quietly enjoy them, or join the merry party which was often gathered together in his house, as he best pleased. Mrs. Trevor was also seated with her work a little apart, she was very silent, but a gentle and elegant woman, and was the only sister of Mrs. Leigh of Leigh.

Mr. and Mrs. Trevor had but one child, who in consequence of the early death of

her brother and sisters was, as may be imagined, everything to her parents ; with her natural good sense, their indulgence had done her no other harm, than that of making her rather more decided in her opinions, and rather more in the habit of giving them, *Oh indeed. Ha! Ha!* than is usual in girls of her age ; indeed in general at nineteen they have no opinions to give. She had, however, been brought up so much with her parents, and particularly had been such a companion to her father, who was a very clever man, that hers was no common mind.

One or two gentlemen were entering the room after dinner, and a few others were expected, but all were familiar friends, and met on this especial occasion, to welcome an established favorite, and rejoice more than his own immediate family had done, in his good fortune.

“ Well, Mr. Keane, is Horace not come yet ? that you are actually and for once to be seen without him,” said Blanche Trevor, a stately looking girl, to a gentleman, who

being the first to leave the dinner table had taken the seat next her.

Mr. Keane turned his remarkably beautiful and childlike eyes upon her in what he intended for a very searching manner, and smiled.

"You mean that he is down-stairs—arrived since dinner," said Blanche.

"I do believe, Miss Trevor," said the gentleman, "that you know what people are thinking of."

"Take care of yourself if I do," said the lady as she rose with her mother to receive her favorite cousin.

"How did you leave my sister?" enquired Mrs. Trevor.

"My mother is quite well, I thank you."

"You must accept our warmest congratulations, my dear nephew," continued Mrs. Trevor with a smile.

"And my best wishes, Horace," said Blanche, her fair face beaming with sincerity.

"Don't forget mine, old fellow," said Keane wringing his hand.

“ Or mine,” said a low voice from the round table close to him, and Horace Leigh, with the colour rushing over his forehead, turned to thank the fair speaker. She was a very lovely creature, with a tall, slight figure, and dark hair banded back from a face whose calm and pleading expression, with its soft, brown eyes, reminded one of a Madonna. He lingered near her for a moment, but there was no room by her side, there seldom was ; her attention had already been engaged by others of the party ; and with a slight touch of the hand, Horace Leigh past on, to encounter more congratulations.

“ I’m not sure, Mr. Keane, that I am so very glad of this expected fortune,” said Blanche quite forgetting to whom she was speaking.

“ Not pleased ! not glad !” was the astonished reply ; “ I don’t understand you !”

Blanche gave a quiet little smile, he never did understand her.

“ I am afraid he may be spoiled,” said she,

endeavouring to put the many sided thoughts that were crossing her mind into a form suited to his comprehension.

“Do *you* think he *can* be spoiled?” said Mr. Keane, trying to look wise, but only succeeding in looking handsome; “Horace is perfection, isn’t he, in *our* eyes, Miss Trevor?” and he was silently delighted at the meaning and the emphasis that he had thrown into this speech.

“In *our* eyes he is,” replied Blanche, looking him full in the face; “we are his friends, and I am, besides, his cousin.”

“‘A little less than kin, and more than kind,’” vacantly answered the young man, who had never been known to quote in his life before, but was evidently inspired by the subject. “I speak for him—of course I meant—I mean nothing,” stammered he, as he perceived a cloud upon the lady’s usually placid brow.

“You never do mean much,” thought Blanche, with a little laugh to herself, add-

ing aloud, with some decision—"I wish you would leave off these hints."

"People will talk!" said Mr. Keane.

"Such an old story as it is," said Blanche, laughing out merrily. "Two years ago the grand report arose, that Horace and I were to be married! We laughed it over, and we traced it out. We traced it to the butler of the opposite house, here, at the corner, who had observed it to the cook, from seeing us walk out sometimes! From such ignoble cause what vast effects might flow, if we were not wise enough to see the utter absurdity of it."

"Very well to say so," said Mr. Keane, who was laboring that evening under a fit of absolute inspiration.

"Why what has come to you?" enquired Blanche, in amused astonishment.

"Would you laugh at me, and tell Miss Walgrave there quite out loud what I was saying—if I owned that I was jealous?" asked Mr. Keane, in a low voice.

“Certainly I should tell some one, to punish you,” laughed Blanche.

“If you wouldn’t tell everybody all I say as you always do,” said the young man in a comic despair, “I could say—so much.”

“Nonsense?” said the lady, as she left the sofa. Frederick Keane remained in his comfortable position, thinking that on the whole he had actually come off victorious in the conversation with Miss Trevor, whom he very much admired, and very much feared; he wondered at his own boldness, and became very red as he began to fancy he had been almost, not to say quite, impertinent, and as the thought struck him, he got up, and crossing the room to help Blanche to find the song she was about to sing, he began to apologise in the most abject and alarmed manner till her merry laugh made him happy again.

“The idea of being angry at his impertinence,” thought Blanche—“his is the pertness of a child, what a strange friend

for Horace Leigh!" and she commenced her song.

"Blanche," said a deep voice, full of feeling, and capable of much expression, "we must have one of our old conferences; I shall not feel my new position aright till I have talked it over with you; there is a delightful corner there;" and they took possession of it.

"Cousin Horace, you are rich, and to be richer. Hail thane of Cawder now—hail king that shall be!"

"The thane of Cawder lives an excellent and kind old lady," laughed the heir in prospect; "and long may she live!"

"If I had to give a toast this evening, Horace, it certainly would be 'The aunt, God bless her!' and yet I do really believe in my heart that I am sorry," said she, portentously shaking her head.

"You wouldn't say that without a reason, Blanche, so tell me why."

"In the first place you will be an idler,

and I shall not care for you ; in the next place you will be changed—you will be so courted and run after that you won't care for us."

"How can you say so, when you know this room at this moment holds all I care for on earth, of man or woman, Blanche."

"Hush, hush! why any one would fancy you meant me," said she, looking anxiously round for listeners, and seeing Frederick Keane in the act of turning away, "though I know better."

"Have I not brother, sister, everything here in this room—in Keane, and you, and *her*," said Horace, in a low, but passionate voice ; "what can change me to you? Fair sister Blanche, you are unjust."

"For the first time it must be, then," smiled she ; "you have never accused me of that before ;" and she turned to answer some one who asked her to dance.

"Just look," said Mr. Keane, who was going to join the quadrille with Miss Walgrave, the very beautiful and gentle girl we have already described—"just look how Mr.

Leigh is making love as usual to Miss Trevor !”

“ Do you think he cares for her ?” asked his partner, in a quiet, but not very steady tone.

“ It looks very like it, doesn't it now ?”

“ You ought to know,” replied Miss Walgrave, as a shade of sadness came over her fair face.

“ He's a great flirt is Horace ; do you like flirts ?” enquired Mr. Keane.

“ I ? I don't know ! I'm scarcely out !”

“ But you're a friend of Miss Trevor's, *that* I've heard ; are you afraid of her ? I am. She is so dreadfully clever you have no idea—she sees quite through one.”

Miss Walgrave had not seen enough of the handsome young speaker to know how easy it was to see through *him*, so she felt quite alarmed.

“ I wonder if it will ever be,” said young Keane almost to himself, “ I don't think it will somehow ; she lectures him too much ; I wonder she does. How would you like to

lecture, Horace Leigh. I'm sure I should'nt," continued his great friend laughing at the idea.

On looking at his pretty partner he was much surprised to find that something he had said had thrown her into a painful state of confusion but as he never understood anything he did not understand that.

"May I have the pleasure of the next dance, Miss Walgrave?" asked the very person they had been talking about.

"Engaged," replied the lady looking down.

"The next," enquired Horace Leigh in a tone which did nothing towards making her feel less embarrassed.

"Engaged again."

"Surely the next to that?" pleaded the gentleman.

"Engaged—engaged, you are too late," replied Miss Walgrave, lifting her large brown eyes to his with a look which plainly asked, "Why are you too late?" and Horace bowed to hide his bitter disappointment, and went

to Mr. Trevor's corner of the room, moodily throwing himself into a chair.

Horace Leigh was good and noble-minded, was high-principled and kind, but he was not without a fault which sometimes obscures all better qualities ; he had the family bad temper. Controulled, carefully checked ; still his feelings were so quick so easily hurt—that we must own, our hero had a temper.

“ My dear Horace you don't look so wonderfully happy as one might expect !” said Mr. Trevor quietly addressing him.

“ I have the—toothache sir,” said Horace actually telling an untruth to avoid the scrutiny of the keen eyes now fixed upon him.

“ You had better ask your Aunt or Blanche ; they have Eau de Cologne or something that would do you good !”

“ I doubt it !” answered Horace smiling ; “ you have however given me a lesson, I ought indeed to be happy ; to allow no little thing, or great, to fret me at this time, when

I have just received so perfectly undeserved a prospect of happiness ; for say what they will, money is surely happiness ?"

" Enough is absolutely necessary," gravely answered the experienced man.

" And who shall say what is enough," answered the young nephew thoughtfully, " one's wishes change so fast."

" When one is young they do," said Mr. Trevor, with a melancholy smile, " but long before my age is reached, a change of any kind, even for the better, is avoided as a grief, one has made up one's mind."

" I wish I had attained that happy time," absently answered Horace.

" Do not wish that ; youth is the time for action and for change. Forward in youth, should be your motto ; would you like to stand still now in your spring ? When did the spring stand still ! have you no hope and no ambition ? Plough the earth now, and sow the seed ; and when the harvest is gathered in—then wish for rest

—you have deserved ; you will enjoy it. I know you well, you are not made for rest,—your mind would prey upon itself. Work while you can, rest when you must ; change and excitement, wishes and eager hopes, work and strife in the busy world are good for you. I have worked and my work is done, I now can *think* here in my old arm chair : but do not wish you had made up your mind ; many a year and many a trial only can make you do that ; you have the experience of a life to gain before you can attain that end—and then, Horace, it is a melancholy one. But you must work for it nevertheless, and do not let the promise of this future wealth charm you to idleness—it was not made for such as you.” And Horace Leigh listened with deep attention, for the words, chosen by one who knew him well, awoke his half slumbering ambition, and stirred up his powerful but perhaps too refining mind, to action.

The party was dispersing, he had not once

left his corner by Mr. Trevor till he found himself the last in the room ; he shook hands warmly with Blanche, and whispered, " Good night, I shall come to-morrow, I have not said one word to her to-night."

CHAPTER II.

YOUNG Frederick Keane and Horace Leigh were friends, beyond the common acceptance of the term ; and Blanche was not by any means the only person who had thought it strange ; this intimate association of the strong and weak is sometimes seen, and glaring contrasts as they were they had been friends from childhood ; brought up at the same early school, they had apparently nothing in common : Frederick was as gentle in character as he was fair and delicate in ap-

pearance, and his extreme and credulous simplicity, which still existed, entailed upon him as a boy all the torments that can be devised by school boys only ; the generous feelings of Horace were roused by his good-tempered endurance of their well planned annoyances ; he fought one or two stout companions in his defence, and loved him ever after. At Eton Keane would have been in never ending scrapes but for the willing help of his old friend, and if he past his Little Go, and actually took his degree, Frederick knew well, though nobody else did, that he owed these astonishing, and generally unexpected pieces of good luck to the circumstance, that his self-constituted private tutor was no other than Horace Leigh ; if Horace lost a little time and credit for himself in thus bestowing them on his friend, he did not regret it.—That young Keane who had much affectionate gratitude in his peculiar composition, should cling to such strong handed friendship as this is not to be wondered at, that he should delight in

the companion who furnished him with ideas, and whose clear understanding of all things enabled him to understand some things more or less, was very natural ; but what pleasure the bitter and clever Horace could have in the society of a man to whom his complicated nature was a riddle, Keane could not attempt to solve ; what comfort Leigh could find in the shallow mind which he dared not trust because it would not discover that it was betraying a confidence, even when doing so the most completely ; what happiness this constant association with an inferior mind, could give to Horace Leigh, is not so easy to imagine ; he honoured and esteemed, and placed the blindest confidence in Blanche Trevor, and yet he did not love her ; he smiled at, looked down upon, and had no trust in Frederick Keane, and yet he gave to him a real affection, and had proved himself for years no ordinary friend.

Surely it must have been that the calm, quiet, acquiescing nature of young Keane, was quite a rest, to the unquiet mind of

Horace, struggling as he had done from a boy, to be in the foremost rank ; in aiming so high he had, though sometimes failing to attain that point, accomplished much ; and from the earnest fight with rival claims to superiority of intellect, he had always found it a relief to turn to the affectionate face of his amiable but simple friend.

Frederick Keane had been an only son and a spoilt child. Sailors are often apt to spoil their children, they see so little of them, especially in time of service and of war ; and his father, Admiral Keane, had been much at sea. He did not long enjoy his well earned rank, and Frederick's early years had been spent with a doating mother and with the occasional petting, of his scarcely less indulgent father : they were both dead now, and young Frederick had no very near relation left. His parents had allowed him to follow Horace Leigh to school, and his mother's last act was to place him at the same

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college at Oxford. Hitherto Keane had been by far the richer man ; his independence, four or five hundred a year, was quite enough for one who really had not an extravagance, but for the future he had no prospects ; he had now, all that he would ever have, of worldly goods ; and in his profession, which was to be the Bar, his success was ridiculously improbable.

Gentle and gentlemanly, refined almost as a woman, unusually handsome, and with a winning cheerfulness of manner, Frederick Keane took his part on the world's stage as "walking gentleman," at least so said his friend Tom Daunton ; unfit for all the struggles of life, a quiet path seemed to be marked out for him ; let us hope he will not by any circumstance be led to wander from it.

"Highly annoying thing—most horrid bore," said Frederick, to his friend a day or two after his return from Town ; "I am a persecuted wretch."

“What is the matter ? something rather serious to discompose you so,” said Horace Leigh.

“I wish I was deaf,” sighed Fred.

“Perhaps you may be in time, whilst there’s life, there’s hope,” carelessly answered Horace.

“You wouldn’t like it, I can tell you,” observed Fred, pitifully shaking his handsome head.

“Wouldn’t like what ?” laughed Horace Leigh, amused as usual at the peculiar want of lucidity in Frederick’s little speeches.

“Music,” said Fred.

“Why shouldn’t I ? some people do,” quietly answered Horace.

“It does make such a row ;” pathetically continued the gentle and simple Fred, “all day and night, all night and day.”

“What ?” enquired Horace impatiently, “what *are* you going to say ?”

“Oh, hang that music !” pettishly exclaimed poor Fred.

"You'd better try to hang it," drily replied his friend.

"Just think," said Fred, "in my nice lodging, Horace, so comfortable as I was ! its now full of professionals—as full as it can hold, and so all day they play and sing, and that I should'nt mind, but then all night they sing and play, such solos, full of shrieks and chorusses of roars—and then Horatio, when they've done, when they're all gone to bed, at two or three o'clock, the worst of it begins."

"What can be worse," said Horace laughing.

"Then they begin to *tune the piano*—it is a wretched, miserable *Fact*."

"Alas, poor Fred !" ejaculated Horace in a mock sentimental tone.

"But I must go, must cut, no human being that had ears could stay ; such a nice lodging as it was ! oh, those professionals !"

"And yet after all they are quite right," gravely answered Horace Leigh, "we should do well, to do as they do."

“What, tune a piano all night long? enquired the literal Fred, opening his wondering eyes.

“Practise what we profess,” said Horace in a mocking tone, “you’re too much persecuted, you must move; and so must I, for this wont do for a man of my enormous income!” and he looked round upon that most dismal of earthly things, a temporary London lodging.

“It is a great bore, this moving,” said Frederick Keane stretching himself in the arm chair, with a laziness altogether unknown to our great grandfathers, (if we are amongst those who ever had them!) “everything is so much trouble,” continued he. “Horatio pray don’t laugh, for I shall never find so nice a lodging, never, I am quite in a despair.”

“Poor, dear Fred,” thought Horace with the affectionate sympathy of the strong for the weak, “you are as helpless as a woman, you actually want some one to take care of

you," and he went off into a reverie. His friend sat opposite him, with his remarkably beautiful eyes fixed on the fire ; what he was thinking of, it would be quite impossible to say, certain it is, he could not himself have told.

The result of the meditations of Horace Leigh soon formed itself into words, "Fred, what do you say to our living together, if we are so seldom, why should we ever, be apart."

"Splendid," said Keane rising with great and genuine delight, "splendidly jolly."

Smiling affectionately at his odd choice of words, Horace observed, "Perhaps you had better think of it."

"What is there to think about?" said Keane in the most innocent way, "if you propose it, it must be all right, why we shall live like kings."

"Very nearly," said Horace drily, "but I must explain to you old fellow, that I don't mean to lead an idle life, I shall have

chambers too, and work there like a Turk though why one should say that, I don't know, for they do nothing."

"I'm sure I don't," said Fred.

"Don't know, or don't do, anything?" quietly enquired Horace.

"Don't bother," said Keane in a spoilt child voice.

"I wont," laughed Horace, "I promise I wont do so any more, so we will find a domicile; come, let us look for one."

"I leave all that to you," said Keane.

"I shall have all my own way," said Horace.

"I shall be always near you," replied Keane.

"My dear," said Lady Walgrave to her husband, that day, "we must give a dinner-party, I wish to ask young Leigh, he has been very attentive to dear Isabelle, and he has never dined here once."

"That will be a very unnecessary trouble, my love, the young man is not worth en-

couraging—very good I dare say ; but nobody and nothing.”

“ Very old family,” suggested Lady Walgrave.

“ So are we, my dear ; but family pictures as you know, are sometimes all that remains to an old family—”

“ That is not the case with the Leighs, though it is with my poor brother,” replied the wife.

“ I thought you did not give dinners to younger sons, my dear,” said Sir Josiah Walgrave in a sarcastic tone, for his lady wife was a manœuvring mama.

“ I do, when they are heirs to a few thousand pounds a-year,” replied the irritated lady, “ old Mrs. Vernon has declared she leaves him her estate.”

“ Ask him to dinner by all means,” replied Sir Josiah with an shrug. “ I only hope my pretty Isabelle may marry as she likes—she will do very well without *her* stratagems,” he muttered to himself, “ dear

little soul, very unlike her mother, luckily—” and he knocked his hat down upon his head and banged the street-door ; he had a very particular contempt for his wife’s managing propensities, and was in no hurry to get rid of his two pretty daughters, who were the sunshine of his house ; and yet he let Lady Walgrave do as she pleased, he really could not help it ; he rebelled in words, never in actions. So he walked on through the busy streets of London looking but not seeing ; mechanically keeping on his way though completely occupied with his own thoughts ; absorbed in a new project which he was perfectly certain would be successful—a project not of his own, but one for which he was eagerly furnishing the means.

In workshops, amongst manufactories, did Sir Josiah Walgrave spend the time of his stay in London ; he was an amateur in mechanics ; sometimes he hit on an invention ; but they never came to much, and he had long since given them up ; but if an unknown genius wanted help, a new inven-

tion was struggling into existence, a grand improvement as yet unacknowledged by the world required assistance in its progress, the helping hand, with a purse in it, always extended on such occasions, belonged to Sir Josiah Walgrave, he was always ready to patronise such things with interest and principal !

Lady Walgrave entered the drawing-room to seek her daughters ; but found only Isabelle.

“ We are going to have a dinner-party and you had better write the notes ; stay, I will read you out the list, or there perhaps you had better take it ; for our gentlemen, I mean to ask Lord Arthur Stanley, Mr. Ward, and Mr. Horace Leigh—” not choosing to observe the involuntary start her daughter gave, she went on quickly—“ A very nice and clever person Mr. Leigh ; I am afraid, my dear, you were not so civil to him as you might have been last night, he did not pay you much attention, which must have been your fault.”

“If you remember, dear mama, you told me I ought not to—talk—or dance so much with Mr. Leigh—” and the poor girl coloured deeply.

“You are a good, obedient child, my love, and I certainly did not like a daughter of mine to make herself conspicuous ; but—but I’ve no objection *now*, if you like to talk to him better than other people—do as you please my love—only be civil to him as our guest for the first time ; now write the notes and quickly, I will take care they are sent—” and Lady Walgrave left the room.

Isabelle sat perfectly still with her beautiful soft brown eyes fixed upon vacancy, but with a look of sorrow and care on her young face.

“So soon, so very soon, he will despise us, he will think perhaps it is my doing,” and the tears came into her eyes as she thought almost aloud ; “never to ask him once all through the year, and now to-day—at once.”

Isabelle Walgrave had a proud and upright

heart, and she suffered much from the machinations, not always well concealed, of her shallow but manœuvring mother, but now for the first time they were bitter indeed. She took the paper to write an invitation to Horace Leigh ; to most girls this would have been no unwelcome task, but to her it was very painful.

“ He will see through it,” was her only thought, “ I must be cold and distant, very cold, or he will think I wished him to be asked—I would have given worlds one little week ago to see him here ; but now, if he should think my mother courts him for his money !—oh, if he were but poor again !—” and yet with all these feelings at which the old may smile, but which have rankled deep in many a young and honest heart, she wrote the invitation neatly and prettily ; how little do our feelings interfere with every day affairs.

She read it over, her first note to Horace Leigh, the few and formal words which had excited so much pain in her girl’s heart, she

wondered if he would guess it was her handwriting, if he would look at it with interest, and the colour came to her fair young cheek as she wondered still more if he would come ! She sealed the note, and when the rest were written took it up again to see how it would look when he received it ! and yet she was no foolish girl, she had good sense, although so managing a mother kept back her daughters from the paths of every day experience more than was good for them : she was a true-hearted and most gentle girl, with all the romance of early youth still lingering in her mind ; she was just such a one as men would hope for as a wife, quiet and lovely, tender and amiable, with a proud and upright spirit, but with little cleverness of any kind ; without a doubt she was the very wife for Horace ; and so she watched that little formal note out of the room, and coloured as she did so.

What deep and thrilling emotions do we experience at trifles light as air when we are young ; how keen our pleasures, and how

sharp the pangs a word or look can cause ; and how we marvel at these things when we are old enough to have cold hearts.—It is a pity that that day should ever come, and yet the taming of years has its bright side—it saves people from all sorrows except real ones, and it saves them a world of hub-bubble-bubble, toil and trouble when they have ceased to fall in love !

Horace Leigh carelessly turned over his letters, many were invitations, and few were bills, which last was a remarkable fact ; he read them carelessly out to Frederick, who was there of course, for he always was within a given number of yards of his friend Leigh—

“ Invitation to Lady Rose 14th.,—Mrs. Chester’s ball 31st.,—long letter from Tom Dalton,—hearty congratulations.—Letter from my dear mother—dance at Mrs. Blake’s—” and then there was a silence, and if Frederick ever saw anything he would have seen Horace turn a very singular colour, men’s foreheads always turn so red ;

and then he would have remarked that instead of throwing that envelope into the fire, the note was replaced therein, and Horace very quietly left the room.

With a step as quick and light as if he were walking to music, for his own happy thoughts were urging him on, Horace Leigh past on his way to Grosvenor Square, for one of what he called his conferences with his cousin ; his impetuous nature required a calm voice to soothe it down at times, and Blanche, with her quiet, matter of fact, good sense, had often been of the greatest use to him ; she was born to be a confidante ; strangers would tell her at times of thoughts and feelings, they assured her they kept as secrets from their nearest and dearest friends ; everyone felt at once that they might trust her ; often had she been the mediator in family disputes---Many a time had she extricated her young friends who grouped round her as a centre from their slight but awkward scrapes ; and so Blanche Trevor knew more of

human nature, and had read more curious pages of the human heart than many an older person.

"Miss Trevor is at home of course," said Horace to the servant, who answered his energetic and eager knock at the door.

"At home, sir," replied the man, "but engaged in the back drawing-room sir with Mr. Spildin."

"And who is Mr. Spildin?" enquired Horace.

"The Drawing Master, sir."

"Well I suppose I can see Mrs. Trevor," said the young man, impatiently making his way up stairs, and much disappointed at the unexpected interruption.

Mrs. Trevor opened the doors between the drawing rooms partially, and after a few moments of conversation, declared that she was particularly busy that morning, and would be really obliged to Horace, if he would chaperone Blanche with that oddity of a man, Mr. Spildin, whose lesson would not last above a quarter of an hour longer, "be

steady, that is all I ask, and pray don't make your cousin laugh," said Mrs. Trevor as she left the room by another door.

"How do you do, Horace," said Blanche with a remarkably expansive smile on her usually placid face as she nodded to him over her paintbrush, "you did not know I was taking lessons in oils; go and sit behind the easel, Horace, and take a book, that large one there, and don't look this way or I shall spoil my picture," and she said all this in so very decided a tone that Horace felt it was absolutely necessary to do exactly as he was ordered, and accordingly he obeyed her instructions to the letter, only turning round just when he had quite arranged himself to see why upon earth he ought not to look!

"Pray turn yourself more round," said Blanche, in a pettish voice, which contrasted very oddly with the extreme hilarity of her face.

"Your tones are not tender enough, mum," eagerly interrupted the artist, "I've often told you so, mum," and he seized the

brush, and mixed another tint, "*that's* what *I* call a tender tone ; imitate *that*, mum, *if you can.*"

The artist was a little ugly man, with a peculiarly conceited and triumphant look, and voice ; and the extreme familiarity and energetic impressiveness of his phraseology, which was confused to a degree, mixed up pupil and brush, and picture, till no one could actually tell which he meant, or which *was* which : this quaint vulgarity of speech was qualified by such a humble and obsequious manner as made it less offensive, whilst it formed a most ludicrous combination.

Horace Leigh completely turned his back, and shrank in good earnest quite behind the easel ; he thought, upon the whole, it was the better plan.

There was a pause.

" More white, a little grey—now, mum, you must go right up into the sky—quick, mum, quick, now you may come down again gently, mum, gently—take care of that tree or you'll do yourself a hurt, you will—

you can go off behind that mounting there ; very well done—I could'n't have done it better."

And there was a pause.

" You're doing it beautiful !" exclaimed the artist in an admiring tone—" You ar'nt afraid of being too blue, you ar'nt—some of my ladies is.—You're not a bit too blue, though some people might think so ; Ogland might."

" Pray who is Ogland ?" asked Blanche.

" An artist, mum, like me, only not so good, *I* think ; *he'd* say that mounting was too blue ; but if I take this bit of brown for the foreground, mum, where you haven't put nothink, this bit of brown I, say, will make that there mounting go right off into the distance, like a shot—" and he enthusiastically put a nameless piece of something on the picture.

" There, mum," said he, " why you might see it go !"

There was a slight and unaccountable noise—it came from behind the easel.

“ I am afraid, mum, you are nurvous, your hand quite shake it do—”

“ Oh, it is nothing, thank you,” replied the pupil, “ it will go off,” but her voice shook too, which was very remarkable, for she was not a nervous person by any means.

“ You paint so clean,” observed Mr. Spildin, with a profound bow ; “ some of my ladies are very clean, and some of em are dirty ; dear me, mum, what a pity !—allow me to touch that bit ;—you’ve nearly spoilt it, that you have !—” and Blanche resigned the palette and the brush.

“ Yes, mum,” continued the artist, “ I always say Miss Trevor is my best pupil—she paint so clean she do ! now some of em I *could* mention—a little grey ; you see Miss *Grigson’s* very dirty now ; she paint her gown, she paint her hands, she paint everything *well*—except her picture, mum.—Oh, that’s a fact she do !”

“ Pray, sir,” enquired Horace suddenly,

but still carefully concealing himself, "may I ask if you paint from Nature?"

"No, sir, I don't, sir, *never*," said the artist solemnly, "Nature take time she do, and *I* have't no time; the omnibusses don't give me no time they stops for ever—Now, good morning, sir, good morning, mum—" and he left them.

"What do you think of *him*?" enquired Blanche imitating his emphasis with perfect gravity and great success.

"Good," said Horace with a gravity like hers, "really good."

"Artists who do *not* draw from nature are likely to be slightly original," observed she with the same unnatural quietness.

Horace could stand it no longer.

"How did you ever hear of such a man?" said he laughing aloud.

"He was well recommended by my friend Miss Blake, as a master really capable of teaching all the mechanical art of painting in oils, at half-a-crown a lesson; think of that friend Horace, and his philosophy! you

have not heard one word of that, for he was strictly professional to-day he was ! before a stranger."

"Blanche," said her cousin, "I must ask a favour of you, I *must* hear that man again."

"You can come on Tuesday or Thursday, when you like, the hour is always two, and sometimes he is really worth the one half-crown ! poor little man !"

"Now for a conference, Blanche," said Horace, "pray let us leave this paint," and he opened the folding door for her—at the same moment, "Lady and Miss Walgrave," were announced.

CHAPTER III.

HORACE waited for a few moments after his cousin had entered the front drawing-room, before he could find courage to face his lady love ; for such she might be said really to be although as yet no positive words of love had crossed his lips ; many of them warm and sincere, were lying in the depths of his heart, ready for use ; but as yet they remained there, quietly biding their time :—till lately their utterance would have been thought dishonorable, as he had no means of marrying ; but now they might find their

way to her attention, any day or any hour, unchecked by any worldly fear or consideration. He nerved himself for the unexpected meeting as well as he could, he tried to be as cool and as indifferent as possible, and when he imagined himself to have perfectly succeeded, he walked round and entered the room where the ladies were assembled. Miss Walgrave was sitting with her back to the door, and did not of course turn round, so Horace, feeling exceedingly foolish, and very like a boy, walked up the spacious apartment to speak to her mother, who received him in the most amiable and gracious manner imaginable, earnestly hoping he had received their note, and that Sir Josiah and herself would have the pleasure of seeing him at dinner : “ indeed, Sir Josiah had so often heard of him, that he was quite anxious to make his acquaintance.”

Horace bowed and smiled nervously : he had never felt thus before, when he had not a hope. He owned himself disengaged, declared he should be most happy to dine in

Cavendish Square, and then turned round ; it was the wrong Miss Walgrave ! Throughout the rest of the visit Horace was altogether inconsolable ; he had wound himself up to an unwonted pitch of emotion, and the disappointment was enough, as he declared to himself, enough to put any body in a rage, it was quite ridiculous, and altogether unbearable ; in short he made himself so far from agreeable, that Miss Louisa Walgrave , who was two or three years the oldest of the two, told her sister in confidence that—" Mr. Leigh might be a very delightful person, but that he certainly had a bad temper."

Isabelle could not be put out of temper by any possible circumstance, but she felt very much annoyed at having missed an opportunity of seeing Horace ; she had decidedly objected to calling on Mrs. Trevor that morning, and had particularly asked her sister to take her place, because she was afraid she might meet him ; and now, with the delightful consistency usual under

such circumstances, she was very sorry indeed that she had been so silly as to stay at home! she did not attach quite so much importance to his being out of temper as her sister did, or rather she attached much more; for she judged him rightly, and believed that he was cross, because he was really disappointed. People are rather apt to confound feeling with temper.

Poor Horace was unlucky that day, for visiter after visiter arrived, and prevented his having the smallest chance of a conversation with Blanche, and when the carriage came to the door he left them reluctantly.

By degrees he recovered his equanimity; and having arranged to meet Keane late in the afternoon, he determined upon calling on the eminent lawyer with whom he had been reading for the last year, and asking his advice on his future career. He was in earnest; a proof of a strong mind, at his age, and under his peculiar circumstances.

Taking a coach, for cabs were not then hurry-skurrying through London day and

night, he approached the part of the town sacred to law, and enquired when arrived, at his destination, if Mr. ———— was disengaged and could see him. He was answered in the affirmative.

Mr. ———— was sitting in his usual place at a remarkably old leather covered table; an equally ancient and time-worn chair, two sides of the room filled with bookcases, one other table with papers, a very old carpet, and a singularly dusty atmosphere, with one or two old chairs, completed the *tout ensemble* of the room. He welcomed his young friend with great cordiality.

“I must beg your pardon for intruding on you,” said Horace in his frank, manly way, “for I see you are engaged, I shall be happy to call again,” and he glanced at an elderly man who had nothing remarkable about him except his broad head, and shrewd, intelligent eyes, who was sitting near Mr. ———— with his elbow on the table and his quiet, observing face, leaning on one

hand, whilst the other rested on a large bundle of important looking papers.

"You need not mind that gentleman, he is waiting for papers, without which we cannot go on with our business; unless indeed you have anything to say which requires my private room---shall we go there?"

"My business is of no importance and requires no secresy," said Horace, slightly colouring, "it only concerns myself; but during the time I was your pupil here, you so often desired me to apply to you for advice, that I have ventured to do so, now that I am about to begin my course."

"Why, my dear Leigh," replied the lawyer, "surely my old friend Trevor told me you had come into a fine fortune."

"I have the *promise* of one," smiled Horace, "but I am even more anxious than ever, to make my own way, by my own exertions."

"You have the right spirit in you," said the lawyer kindly, "and if you wish for my advice, you shall have it. I am not often at

leisure, as I shall be for the next ten minutes."

He employed them in laying down the law, literally as well as metaphorically, and bestowed on Horace, advice truly invaluable; he had struggled up to eminence himself, and was well able to point out the path.

With an expression of the gratitude he felt, Horace Leigh wrung the offered hand of his real friend, and left the room.

The old gentleman alluded to, had been watching the kindling face of the young listener, with great interest; he thought he had never seen a finer countenance; there was an energy in it, not often seen, in one so young; the broad forehead and the rather broad mouth, gave an expression of mingled frankness and power, which was very pleasing; the whole face spoke, and lighted up with changes which were attractive to the old man; for he had learnt to read looks in his long career, and what he read there he liked, he muttered to himself, "he has the eagle eye—hum—he will do!" When Horace left

the room he asked abruptly, "and who is your young friend—"

"The best pupil that ever read with me ; young Horace Leigh, son of old Leigh, of Leigh," said the lawyer rather astonished at the tone of interest in which the old gentleman repeated,

"Son of old Leigh of Leigh, *indeed?* he did me once a service of some consequence, which I have not forgotten. That fine young man is going to the bar—ah, called is he, already. Hum, my good friend ; when *you* have your silk gown, or it may be are a step or two higher up on the ladder—I might be useful to him, eh ?"

"Indeed you might !" replied the lawyer with a note of admiration in his voice.

At that moment the clerk came in laden with a box of papers, and in a few seconds more, these two men were engaged in matters that would have puzzled any heads but theirs, and they had quite forgotten Horace Leigh for the time being.

"It's rather good fun old fellow," said

Frederick Keane to his friend as they sat together over their wine, "but I've got an invite from that Lady Walgrave, with the pretty daughters; at least that Louisa Walgrave is very pretty isn't she? I shall feel quite shy going by myself."

"*I'm* going," said Horace quietly, "if it is the seventeenth."

"Dear me, you never said so," said Fred.

"Did'nt I?" answered his friend, "I suppose I forgot it," and he smiled to himself at the idea.

"Have you found out any place for us to hide our heads in, in style?" asked Fred.

"I think I have," replied Horace, "really a very snug domicile; you'd better look at it to-morrow."

"If you like it *I* shall," coolly replied Keane.

"I've taken it for a year certain, it won't do to tie ourselves together for longer," said Horace, "we might get tired of one another."

"Oh! very likely indeed," said Fred,

meaning his speech to be uncommonly ironical.

"I might get tired of *you*, you know, though you might not of me," answered Horace carelessly.

"You don't mean *that*?" rejoined poor Fred in a tone of great anxiety, and opening his wondering eyes to their fullest extent.

"Perhaps I do—and perhaps I don't," laughed his friend, "so you must be a good boy."

"I *thought* you were joking," said Keane in a tone of great relief, "only you have such a way of saying things, I never understand you above half."

"Many a true word spoken in jest," quietly observed Horace, "but be content, old fellow, I could better spare, a better man."

"There you go again, do you mean that for a compliment or not. I'll be shot if I know; I say Horatio!" continued he, "I've found out what you're like!"

“ Well ?” asked Horace.

Fred triumphantly replied, “ A Chinese Puzzle !”

The seventeenth arrived, Lady Walgrave came down in all the majesty of green velvet, and her daughters were attired as young ladies always ought to be, in plain white muslin : the Trevors arrived first, then a few strangers, and last though not least, Horace and his friend Keane ; the latter instantly sheltered himself under the protection of Blanche, for he was labouring under a shy fit, for reasons known only to himself. He took her down to dinner, and devoted himself to her the whole evening, though it appeared without altogether engrossing her attention ; as he complained the next morning and not without good cause ; that he really believed Miss Trevor had a cold and was deaf, for she very often had answered him wrong, and more than once evidently didn't hear what he said.

Horace was in high spirits, he was seated next Isabelle at table, and though an elderly young lady, who considered herself a wit,

was unfortunately his neighbour on the other side, and would insist on talking to him, and discussing the news, whether he would or no ; with the exception of this contretemps, he spent a happy evening.—Isabelle had previously determined on being very cold to him, but when she heard his voice, and met his eyes, beaming with admiration, all her good resolutions vanished into air, and she smiled and listened, as if he had still been poor. She saw in a moment, that he did not suspect her of setting at him now, and she was very happy in the bright present.

There is this peculiarity in the attachments of very young girls—they never look to the future ; they do not think of marrying, or weighing in the balance whether such an event can be ; they do not think of means or incomes ; they only know that they are happy now, and wish for no change.

Isabelle Walgrave did not once argue with herself that “*now* he could propose.” She

only felt how very delightful it was, that her mother did not now object, to the long conversations upon which she had hitherto lectured as very heinous offences against the rules of young ladyhood. And so she listened in peace and without fear, and it never once occurred to her as strange, that there was less of love in Horace Leigh's sparkling sentences than had of late been addressed to her ; yet so it was ; never had he alluded so little to his affection for her since they first became well acquainted ; his allusions had always been distant, but still sufficiently distinct, but now, this evening, when he might, and could have said so much, to say nothing at all verging upon the subject, was, to make the least of it, very inconsistent. Men are strange creatures, and it is very difficult at times to guess their motives.

Lady Walgrave watched with her practised eyes ; she had a more than usual interest in the matter, as Horace would be in time, no inconsiderable prize, and she was

not altogether satisfied. She fancied they were laughing too much, and that is not in general a satisfactory symptom to anxious mamas.— If there is a life in the world, next to that of a turnspit, most to be pitied, it is that of a chaperone ; to work by day and night, even if innocent of plots and plans—to gaze on the same tiresome, but untiring dancers, with the same weary eyes night after night—to make the same civil speeches to one generation after another of young men—to escort one daughter after another in the same weary round—I really do not wonder that mothers are so anxious to marry their daughters, *and be quiet !*

Sir Josiah detailed to Horace “ a new invention upon a new principle, which was perfectly certain to answer, particularly as his clever friend Lingwood was entering into the speculation with him,” and having found a most attentive listener to the whole account of screws, wheels, levers, and airtight contrivances, not one word of which was clearly explained, or understood ! Sir

Josiah pronounced young Leigh to be one of the most agreeable and sensible young men he had ever "*listened to*;" these were his words he being ; quite unaware, that Horace had merely bowed and smiled, in the most attentive and plausible manner, without once uttering a word ! The young man, however, had his reward, for he was cordially invited to the house whenever he liked to come, and if he would join their party on the following Friday, Sir Josiah "believed that Lady Walgrave had not yet filled the table, but ladies must be consulted, and he never ventured to ask any one into his own house—never ; without asking leave—he strongly recommended Horace to manage better when *he* married."

A few mornings after the party, Horace was in his place, seated with exceeding gravity behind the easel, of which he fully appreciated the advantage.

Blanche had prepared her palette, and they were patiently awaiting the arrival of Mr. Spildin.

He entered with his usual obsequious bows, very much out of breath, and at least a quarter of an hour past his appointed time.

“How do you do, mum, how do you do again, sir!—very sorry, mum, I’m so late—I’m quite behind to-day—how uncommon well your picture looks—but it is not my fault!—I come from Blackwall, mum, a pupil there by the railway, and the rope broke—no offence, mum, I hope; but that was’nt *my* fault.”

He made no stops.

“Oh, pray don’t mention it,” said Blanche, “your time is valuable, but mine is of no consequence.”

“You may well say that, mum,” ambiguously observed the artist, “*my* time is valuable; a half-a-crown an hour—and I should’nt have been so late now, only the omnibus stopped so, that I got out and walked, and after all, mum, I had better not, for feet ain’t omnibusses!”

Faint rustling of the newspaper in Horace Leigh's left hand.

"Have I done this right?" enquired Blanche.

"Perfectly, mum!"

There was a pause.

"Blackwall is a tiresome place to have pupils at, mum," said the painter, in a melancholy voice, "and it's a long ways to come for a half-a-crown, particular if you take a omnibus out of it."

"Indeed it is," replied Blanche, in a compassionate tone.

But it was thrown away, for Mr. Spildin had one of his conceited fits fast coming upon him.

"I'm very low," said he, "I know I am, but my pupils likes to be low, *you* like to be low, (a most respectful bow;) Miss Blake likes to be low, and so *I* gets good pupils—it's a deal of talent that I throw away a teaching of young ladies; but it answer it do.—One half-a-crown is'nt much it is'nt,

but a good many on em is a good many, it is.

“Your colour is’nt strong, mum, you are not half forward enough, you aint indeed! your taste is for the back ground, I see that with half an eye I do—dear me, mum, how very bad that touch is, pray let me—”

And as Blanche rose from her seat and stood behind the artist’s chair to see him rectify her blunder—at that unfortunate moment Horace Leigh turned round, he caught her eye, was seized with a sudden fit of coughing, and fairly rushed out of the room to recover himself.

“Gent-tleman got the influenza, I’m afraid,” said Mr. Spildin; “everybody has got it, now—you’re a coffin, I’m sorry to hear.”

“Oh, nothing,” stammered Blanche; and Horace came back to his place.

“Pray Mr. Spildin,” asked the pupil, “what tree is this in the foreground—is it an ash?”

“It isn’t a oak, and it isn’t a elm, and

it isn't a ash ; it's a *anythink-you-please*, mum. I always does my trees in that way, then nobody carnt say they are not *like*. I've suffered a deal, from people saying things warnt like, when I took likenesses! I've give that up. I've got so many copies to do, of landscapes for my pupils, I carnt do nothing else."

"If you don't draw from nature, how do you get so many copies?" meekly enquired Horace.

"Out of my head, sir, to be sure. My head is everythink to me! Good morning, mum! I wish you well, sir, of the influenza—and good morning too!"

"Not so good this time, sweet sister Blanche," said Leigh.

"Wait till next lesson," said she, laughingly ; "your influenza prevented your enjoying his absurdities. Shocking bad cough you had! But now from lively to severe ; what's this I hear of your having agreed to share with Mr. Keane your roof and your dinner ; you have surprised me

slightly, sir ; I thought that now, friend Horace, of all times in the world, you would not have hampered yourself with a companion, who must, say what you will, be uncongenial ; when—I shall say no more : only I call upon you instantly to rise, reply, explain.”

“ Verily, Blanche, it was at first like many things which shape our fate—a kind of accident. You have not an idea how helpless that poor fellow is ; it’s a great kindness to him ; and I promised it without a thought but for his comfort ; I am so much accustomed to make Fred my first consideration, that really just at the moment, I quite forgot—myself—it was *weak*, that I will grant ; but Fred is just my weakness !”

“ You forgot *yourself*, sir, did you ? and you can sit there and own what very few people in this world can say with truth. I wonder you are not ashamed to say that you *forgot* yourself !” said Blanche, with an arch emphasis. “ You had a right to do

that, certainly ; but you, at the same time, it seems, forgot *some one else* !”

Horace turned very pale ; and there must have been something catching in it, for his cousin’s bright colour faded too.

“ Ah !” he ejaculated, “ I felt that ! but I could not disappoint poor Fred.”

“ You care perhaps *more* for poor Fred ?” enquired Blanche, with a keen glance up at his face.

“ Pshaw !” replied Horace, with more feeling than politeness. Then he continued : “ Did you never do a foolish thing, Blanche, that you’re so severe upon me ?”

“ Pray don’t be angry, Horace—I’m not in a fighting humour—I wish to talk—to hear ; and we can fight some other day ; surely it seemed to me, and I observed you sharply, that you and that sweet creature were less like lovers at the dinner than I had ever seen you yet ; will you explain me that ? I thought that wealth might alter even you ! Are you becoming worldly,

Horace—can it be possible that you will change in this ?”

“ It is unjust of *you* who know the rise and progress of i all, to say—you cannot *think* such things,” said Horace, in an indignant voice ; “ I love her better now than ever.”

Blanche turned sharply away—

“ And more. This promised wealth is dear to me, because it will—if my hopes do not deceive me, Blanche—because it will embellish the future, which would be nothing to me, without her.”

“ I am glad to hear this ; nothing could compensate to me for the grief of seeing you act in a manner I could blame,” said Blanche, in a tone of very deep emotion.

“ I thank you, Blanche, I value your esteem—you know it.”

“ Then you are unchanged ?” said she.
“ Well, certainly if it be so ; she has some reason *now* to doubt that fact ! I wish to ask you, Horace, what will *she* think of this

new plan, now that at last, your means enable you to offer, and to marry ?”

A deep gloom came over the face of Horace Leigh.

“ You probe me to the quick ;—word for word, of course, all this has come before my mind ; but Blanche, I do think now ’twill be as well to feel my way. Isabelle is a flirt ; I often tried to blind myself to this—but it is really so ; and since I’ve made a fool of myself, and tied my hands for a whole year, it may be just as well ; for I shall feel more sure of her affection if she can stand the trial.”

“ I did not think you had been so unfeeling, Horace,” said Blanche, curling her lip—“ I really fancied you a man of honor and principle, I really did ; -and now to hear you so quietly talking of *trying her affection !*”

“ Excuse me, Blanche ; I am in toils of my own setting ; and I am trying to reconcile myself to my own fetters !—I scarcely know what I am saying.”

“I hope not,” said she with some emphasis.

“The fact is I am really unhappy, for besides this stupid piece of my good-nature, I have reasons for delay—substantial reasons, such as you would approve,” said Horace, anxious for her good opinion, “which make me fear—I will explain—I know that you will feel for me—you see, dear Blanche—”

“Mr. Keane,” announced the servant; and at this interesting point their conversation came abruptly to a close.

“I hope you are quite well! no colds this horrid weather?” enquired Keane, rising as soon as he was seated, to speak to Mrs. Trevor, who at that moment entered the room. “I hope you will excuse my early visit, but the fact is that Horace waited for the post, but the rains had delayed the mails, and he had been gone an hour before they came, and as I knew he expected letters, I have brought them for him,” and he extracted two letters from his pocket and handed them to his friend.

“ Pray read them,” said Mrs. Trevor to her nephew ; and they went on talking. Blanche noticed the expression of extreme surprise upon his face, and the astonishment became general when Horace exclaimed—

“ Wonderful news from home ; my brother Luke is going to be married !”

CHAPTER IV.

HUSBAND and wife each in their way plotting and planning foolishly ; the Walgraves also had their family failings. Sir Josiah was sitting in his back dining-room, which he had converted into a sanctum, wholly inaccessible to his wife, or even to his darling Isabelle ; on this one point his orders were actually attended to ; the moment he took his seat at his desk in that room, he felt himself really of an importance, which Lady Walgrave seldom allowed him to assume in

any other part of the house ; the room was fitted up in a very curious style, small models of machinery were scattered about on chairs, tables, and floor ; wherever there was space for them ; and as some of the working models were in motion, a curious noise of wheels, and clicking and humming, and burring, gave one the idea of being in a miniature mill. One very pretty machine was pouring a tiny stream of water upon some incomprehensible principle, and was intended as a successful attempt at perpetual motion—it perfectly succeeded—in looking like a remarkably small cataract ; but was *stopped* one day by some unfortunate little circumstance, or hitch in the machinery ; the whole blame of which the inventor immediately laid upon “the stupid man who made the model !” Close to that, was standing a very peculiar fire-extinguisher, a spring was to be touched after lighting a miniature pile of combustibles, and a kind of very affective shower-bath descended upon the conflagration, and *ought* to have put it out :

only unfortunately one day, the fire gained the mastery over the water, and very nearly burnt down the house ; this useful machine was considered by the inventor so exceedingly important, that no room in any house ought to be without one, particularly as they might be made very ornamental in drawing-rooms, and as useful in bed-rooms as common-place shower-baths.

This model bore a considerable resemblance to a small Punch and Judy theatre, and was very much in the way ; only as it had been given to Sir Josiah by the inventor, who was “ such a very clever, sensible fellow ” and “ so much in the habit of looking in ” that Sir Josiah could not hurt his feelings by removing it.

There was also on chairs, close to the master of the house, a very annoying machine ; for grinding in a way altogether new and extraordinary—which had been left there that morning—this affair had been set to work by the maker, who had at the time carefully explained to Sir Josiah the way in

which it was to be stopped ; as if allowed to go on one moment after the material it was grinding was exhausted ; some very great injury to the model would occur, and something or other very dreadful would happen ; unluckily Sir Josiah was so absorbed in astonishment at the novelty of the idea, that he forgot to notice which screw was to be turned, to produce the desired effect ; the inventor went out of town unexpectedly in the afternoon, leaving his machine behind him ; by that time the material was all ground, and it was absolutely necessary to stop the model ; the only difficulty was how to do it ! Sir Josiah tried in vain to find out which was the screw ; his memory and ingenuity failed him at once—the model went on grinding fiercely ; but since the moment when its progress ought to have been stayed, it had been hourly making more and more noise ; a terrible internal contest was evidently going on ; gratings and scrapings of the most unpleasant kind, enough

to set anybody's teeth on edge were every moment getting worse and worse, and it was evident that something was about to happen. Sir Josiah would gladly have sent the disagreeable, and, for ought he knew, dangerous charge into some other part of the house, but for very shame ; he dared not send amongst the ladies, or servants of his family, what he certainly was afraid to have himself ; and so, expecting a catastrophe, and anxiously hoping for the return of the inventor, there sat the amateur in mechanics, looking as little like a mere quiet country baronet, who had nothing on earth to do but to spend his money, as could well be.

It cannot, however, be denied, that no country gentleman however extravagant, had ever hit upon a more expensive amusement. He was at that moment engaged on the particularly disagreeable employment of looking over his accounts ; I do believe more than one person in this world has been tempted to wish, there was no such thing as

accounts! at all events a young lady was once overheard to make the observation to another who perfectly agreed with her.

Sir Josiah looked from his expense books to his banker's book, and upon the whole he did not much like the look of either, though he could not but observe to the credit of his managing wife, that the sums he had been called upon to give to household matters, were very much more moderate than those which he had paid towards the furtherance of sundry infallible schemes.

A sanguine temperament is in common life a blessing indeed; it urges the happy proprietor on to success, it makes him overcome difficulties, and provides him with hope under all discouragements, but when that temperament is joined to a speculative turn of mind, the advantages of always being led to suppose things are for the best, when they are really very decidedly for the worst, is rather problematical.

The father of the pretty Isabelle had, on that morning, a particular reason for looking

into his affairs ; and unsatisfactory as his inspection had turned out, his spirits were by no means depressed, nor was his love of speculation in any way damped. He had received a letter from one of his manufacturing friends, a Mr. Murdoch, which was couched in the following terms :

“ DEAR SIR,

“ You will be pleased to hear that our plan is progressing fast, Skriggs is most active and everything goes well ; but I now write, for the purpose of recommending to your notice, my friend, Mr. Simmons, one of the cleverest men in England ; he has a plan ready to be put into execution, which he will fully explain to you himself ; he is unfortunately too poor to bring his admirable invention forward at his own expense ; and I have taken the liberty of sending him to you, assuring him that you are possessed of all the knowledge of a practical man, joined to the greatest and most enlightened liber-

ality. A few thousands judiciously advanced at once, would with proper arrangements be the making of more than one fortune ; of course should you come to any agreement with Simmons, I shall be ready to join ; and though very busy at this time, shall give to any orders you may send to my house of business, my best and earliest attention. With gratitude for past favours and the confident hope that this may prove very advantageous to all concerned in it.

“ I remain, sir,

“ Your obedient humble servant,

“ ALEXANDER MURDOCH.”

The excitement of something new was always agreeable to Sir Josiah ; he liked to sit in judgment upon clever things, and to be listened to with deference by clever men, (who generally got something by it !) and now, just when he really had rather overshot the mark in money matters ; to have a scheme proposed, which was to be advantageous, though he did not exactly see how, was really

very agreeable, and he involuntarily rubbed his hands at his own thoughts; though looking at the letter coolly, and with uninterested eyes, it appeared rather that Sir Josiah was to advance money to be laid out in orders to Mr. Murdoch ; than anything else ! this was the real pith of the letter ; but it totally escaped the worthy baronet's notice, who saw nothing but a certain prospect of interest for the present, and advantage for the future. His reverie was broken by a more than usually disagreeable noise from the grinding machine, which being very sudden, rather startled him, and he was prevented from going off again into his golden visions by a decided and rather bullying knock at the door ; (peoples' knocks are so very characteristic) and Mr. Simmons was announced.

He was a tall, slight bowing man, with a very high, bald forehead, a keen, but rather wild blue eye, and a peculiarly uncertain smile ; sometimes satirical, sometimes very sad, and at times really prepossessing ; it was the leading point in his face, that flickering

and changing smile ;—it attracted and repelled by turns, but on the whole there was a something in it of doubtful meaning—he came forward in a timid manner, but when he met the frank and hearty welcome of his future patron, he recovered a kind of confidence, his manner seemed to be as changing as his smile. Whilst listening to the good baronet's polite assurances, that Mr. Murdoch's recommendations were enough to secure him his best attention to “ anything, so clever a man might have to say,” his sharp glances had taken in the whole of the extraordinary furniture of the room ; he had listened both to Sir Josiah, and his machines ; and had fully made up his mind, as to the manner of man with whom he had to deal.

Necessity had taught Mr. Simmons the art of reading character however well concealed ; and that of the learned amateur was so easy of observation, that there could be no merit in seeing what was so open to the view : he felt he must enlist into his service, the

benevolence and vanity of his attentive listener.

“I am a man, Sir Josiah, who has long been struggling with no common difficulties,”—he saw a certain coldness upon his patron’s face, and continued accordingly, “no common difficulties—of science! I was a schoolmaster, and in instructing others I may own I learnt much thoroughly; but I was, unluckily for me, a man of one idea—it haunted me, it rose, it walked, it slept with me, and you will sympathise in this! it was a love for chemistry and mechanics; this by degrees took up a form, an individuality,” Sir Josiah did not look as if he quite understood him, and the speaker lowered the tone of his eloquence. “In short, I became practical, I consorted with practical men, I made improvements, Sir Josiah—and I made money!”

“Indeed; wonderful!” replied his listener “I too have loved mechanics; people bring me, as you see, and I may say as you can *hear*,” for at that moment the grinding

machine made a long whizzing sound of a nature altogether new ; “all sorts of new inventions for my opinion and approval, but I cannot recall to my memory any one of them that has exactly answered ; that is, made money ! no not one,” concluded he, after a moment’s thought.

“ Yes, I made money,” said Mr. Simmons, “and the fact urged me on, not to an anxiety for wealth, but to a greater thirst for science ; my one idea returned, but I had more knowledge, I had more experience, I had more help, but above all more means ; the sinews of practical science, as of war, Sir Josiah,” and the speaker gave one of his very doubtful smiles.

“ Your one idea, what was it ?” said the listener, “an invention ? I have invented things too, and spent money on them, but I’ve given it up ; your pardon, I have interrupted you.”

“ I felt convinced of full success, I made experiment upon experiment, and had just reached, as I thought, the point I wished to

gain, when the manufacturer in whose hands all my unfinished plans were placed, broke suddenly and died : I rescued little, for I had embarked the whole of my savings in his house—I had entered into partnership with him three months before the crash.”

“ Dear me !” replied the Baronet, “ how very, very unfortunate ; and your plans ?”

“ I had not then, nor have I now, the means of carrying them out ; but though at one time forced to take pupils, Sir Josiah, I am a man of no mean origin ; and not long after the fatal event which dashed my hopes, a distant relation died, and I found myself unexpectedly possessed of property as heir-at-law ; with this I have begun afresh—all was to do again, and now ; I want only a coadjutor, an active, practical mind, and a few thousand pounds, to bring triumphantly to light, the work of years.”

Mr. Simmons paused, and the colour faded from his hollow cheeks ; whatever his faults might be, he was an enthusiast : an evident, believer in himself.

Such feelings are very catching, and his listener sat with an excited look varying with the varying tale, and intensely interested, for the hundredth time, in his new friend and his new scheme ; it never struck him till Mr. Simmons paused, that he had not an idea as yet, what the scheme was.

Mr. Simmons went on.

“ Ah ! if you knew the weary days and sleepless nights ; the thought of months, set all at naught by a defect in base material ; the difficulty of reconciling natural laws which *must* be made to work together at our will ; the wearying obstacles of Nature ; and the wearing opposition of one’s fellow-men ; the sneering discouragement, the careless indifference of the world, who will hereafter profit by what they think they may despise ! the pioneer of science has indeed a path more full of briars and thorns, than that which opens to the pioneer of undiscovered lands. The briars and thorns have power to pierce the very heart of him, who seeks to benefit mankind.”

Listening to this, the good, kind baronet was touched ; for Mr. Simmons, with his pale, worn face, and blue eyes lighted up with the unmistakable evidence of mind, whilst his expressive mouth was curling with suppressed bitterness, was no uninteresting person—those who speak from their own hearts, invariably touch the feelings of those to whom they speak ; and Sir Josiah was altogether fascinated : although the flights of his new acquaintance were rather too much into the clouds, he was in earnest : and there is no spell like that.

“ But now,” continued the ambitious man of science, “ *now* I shall look for better and brighter days ; my toils are drawing to a close, and the reward is almost in my grasp—I have made known to many of the scientific world, my plans and practical success ; I have applied to many leading manufacturers and met their approval, and have received offers of their assistance ; I preferred those of our mutual acquaintances Murdoch, and by his wish and at his recom-

mendation, I am come to lay my plan before you, as an acknowledged judge ; as one whose wealth has often been devoted to the aid of the struggling sons of science—not, Sir Josiah Walgrave,” said Mr. Simmons rising from his seat, and assuming an air of proud and conscious independance which made the master of the house feel that he was listening to one fully his equal ; “ not that *I* am about to plead for your assistance,” and his smile was full of scorn at the idea, “ not that I am come here to ask you for your money ;” and Sir Josiah almost cowered under the imputation that he had imagined such a thing ; “ I have come here as to one whose opinion I have been taught to value ; for advice, it may even be for help ;” and here his smile was quite mysterious in its expression, “ and if on hearing my purpose ; the confirmed, the matured purpose of long years ; if upon the knowledge that I have private friends ready to forward it, that I have influential friends ready to procure for me the patronage of government, if I can

bring the thing fully to bear, if upon proof of this, all this, your knowledge should lead you to approve, and your judgment to adopt my scheme. In such a case the capital you might be tempted to *risk*," the emphasis upon this word, the tone and smile of bitter derision stamped it as absurd—"if, I repeat, you should be tempted to *risk* a portion of unemployed capital; it shall be repaid, fully repaid, Sir Josiah, and the advantages which must accrue, will make us more than rich."

The speaker paused with real emotion at the picture he had drawn; and looked so exhausted that his fascinated host hastened to bring some refreshment from a cellaret at hand; he almost feared that Mr. Simmons must be ill. The enthusiast had shown a consummate knowledge of human nature in thus working up the feelings and interest of Sir Josiah, before he disclosed his scheme. With a less shallow and excitable nature, he would have acted otherwise; but all in deep earnest as he was, his judgment was still

cool enough to see the way most open to success, and to pursue it with unerring instinct ; his own lately acquired inheritance was embarked in the venture, and the coadjutor with money whom he now sought to gain, was to him of vital necessity ; before he had so much as given a sketch of his invention, his point was gained.

He next unfolded paper upon paper ; plan on plan ; calculation upon calculation. Mechanics and Chemistry were blended to a nicety, and with no ordinary mastery over their intricacies ; step upon step, he led Sir Josiah with opening eyes and wondering mind, through the mazes he had so long and patiently threaded himself. Plausible were his arguments, more plausible his perfected arrangements ; everything was clear—everything was capable of mathematical proof—and quite as much astonished as delighted, and as bewildered as convinced, Sir Josiah listened whilst Mr. Simmons reasoned thus.—Here they were stopped in their career of conversation.

Deeply engaged as were the inventor and his patron, they could not but observe the interruptions occasioned by the detestable not-to-be-stopped machine for grinding ; it was really quite wonderful that an affair no bigger than half a large table, should or *could* make such abominable and unearthly noises ; it had now changed its shrieks and scrapings, for a series of bangs and jars which were quite intolerable ; and Sir Josiah was obliged to detail the whole history of it, to Mr. Simmons ; it being absolutely necessary for him to explain, that he only tolerated such an annoyance, because he dared not send it away, and *could not stop it*.

The man of science and mechanics, smiled one of his incomprehensible smiles of something that was very like derision, and offered his services to discover the screw which would remedy the matter ; he approached the model which still continued to crash and bang ; he touched a screw or spring ; the noises changed, to something rather worse ! Mr. Simmons again essayed

his skill—there were was a stop—all sound had ceased—he turned triumphantly round to Sir Josiah, who bowed and smiled a premature applause ; for at that moment a spring gave way in that abominable model of a machine ; some part of it broke suddenly, the spring flew out, scattering fragments in its progress ; the angle at which it was projected, unfortunately met the head of Mr. Simmons ; he staggered with the blow, fell stumbling on a chair ; the chair and Mr. Simmons fell upon Sir Josiah Walgrave who was rushing to the rescue ; he staggered, and the whole house shook with the joint overthrow of the poor Baronet and his new and learned friend ; two chairs, one table, and more than one machine !

Horace Leigh was chatting merrily with the ladies in the drawing-room, having as in duty bound paid them a visit after the dinner party ; when the tremendous blowing up, and the heavy and repeated falls that followed closely on it, seriously alarmed them

all ; they started up. Lady Walgrave screamed out—

“ Oh, my poor husband,” as she rushed from the room.

Horace instantly followed her, hoping to be of use ; the two girls stood for a moment in helpless terror, and then they too rushed down, and entering the long forbidden room, were horrified to find their kind, indulgent father stretched on the floor—a chair, and the model that had been on it had fallen in such a way that he evidently could not rise without assistance, and poor Isabelle shrieked as she saw that the tall stranger had also fallen with his whole weight upon him, and that her own dear father’s face was streaked with blood—the poor stranger was with difficulty raised, for he was quite stunned—Isabelle and her mother, assisted of course by Horace, raised Sir Josiah, and to their infinite delight they found he had suffered no material injury ; the blood upon his face was a mere scratch from some glass

which had been upset and broken, and he was sound and unhurt ; but it was a very different case with Mr. Simmons, he had been struck, poor man, by the full force of the broken spring, and remedies were necessary to his full restoration ; but when the excitement and alarm were over, the scene presented was ludicrous in the extreme—the overthrow occasioned by the fall of two large and heavy men, had been very general ; one chair or table had knocked over another ; for both gentlemen had staggered about in the attempt to save themselves carrying everything before them ! One thing was truly provoking, and produced an oath, an actual oath from the quiet lips even of Sir Josiah ; that terrible machine for grinding although its spring *was* broken, had, by some strange chance, some power still left ; for mutilated and exposed to view, its wheels were going still ! in anything but *mute* derision of the mischief it had done.

This was too bad !

Poor Mr. Simmons had by this time re-

covered himself sufficiently to join in the laugh at this discovery, and peace, if not order, was at length restored.

As Horace Leigh walked home, he could but remember with glistening eyes, that at the first alarm, the irresistible impulse of the gentle Isabelle had been to fly to him for a moment, and with a look that haunted him exclaim—

“ Oh, Horace, save my father !”

CHAPTER V.

WE must now return to the old house of Leigh.

“My dear aunt,” said Luke Leigh, on the Tuesday which followed the declaration of her intentions, “can I be of any use in escorting you home on Thursday?”

“I wont deny,” replied Mrs. Vernon, “that I should gladly accept your kind offices, for at my age travelling has its inconveniences; and though Dulton makes himself useful about the luggage, I should be really obliged if you will bear me com-

pany, and of course I shall hope that you will stay with me as long as you like, or can find anything to amuse you."

"Thank you; I accept your invitation," said Luke, with a glow of satisfaction actually lighting up his sullen face.

Ad Mrs. Vernon, too, looked pleased. She thought it really was a very kind attention; he was not in the habit of paying kind attentions, and under the circumstances, just at this very time, when really he might have been justifiably hurt or offended, at her decided preference of his younger brother, it was very remarkable! So amiable, so forgiving, so very different to anything she could have expected from Luke; actually to leave his shooting and his horses, (though certainly she had both at High Elms) was really quite unselfish.

We will assure our readers privately, that the last position remains to be proved.

The journey, accomplished in the days of posting, when people could stand up in a carriage to see what was the matter, with-

out having their heads cut off as by a guillotine, which in these days of railroads has happened, and may happen any day ; the journey in question, was broken by one night spent at an inn ; and during the evening the disinherited nephew took very considerable pains to make himself agreeable ; as an unpredecended fact in the annals of their relationship he offered to read to her ; and she acceded to the proposal, for to one so keen and clever as the well-educated old lady, there was nothing very interesting in his conversation.

On the following day about noon they arrived at their destination, the only events of any consequence having been one very unsteady post-boy, and the fall of one poor overworked horse, which severely injured itself in going down a steep hill ; on these two occasions Luke's presence had been really of use, as he wanted rather the softer than the more manly virtues.

Mrs. Vernon's house was situated within six miles of the county town ; which county

it was, is a very unimportant fact ; the house was an Elizabethan mansion, which had passed from its old owners because none were left who could afford to keep it up ; one extravagant young master after another had brought it to the hammer, though fortunately before the glorious old timber which crowned the hills, or nestled in the little valleys of the very extensive park, had fallen a sacrifice to their necessities.

As the carriage drove up towards the house, Luke could hardly restrain a sigh as he looked at the famous avenue of elms, which was the pride of the place, and from which indeed it took its name ; they were standing there, with the last autumnal tints of a very late season still lingering upon them, and the deer were standing with their heads raised, in that startled attitude which is so beautiful, and then raced away at the nearer approach of the four smoking greys ; Luke Leigh did not restrain a sigh, for it came deep and audible even to his companion. Poor Mrs. Vernon could not

conceal from herself that she was the cause of it—and her kind heart really suffered a pang ; she felt so very awkward !

For two or three days the aunt saw very little of her nephew ; her horses and her keepers were at his disposal ; and she thought nothing of his absence all the day, but she was rather astonished that for two of the three days he had not dined at home ; the first time he told her that Mr. Langton, a neighbouring squire, had insisted on his dining with him, the next time he did not say where he was to spend the evening—and she did not press the question. After this for a few days he devoted himself so entirely to her, playing backgammon, écarté, or anything she pleased, that her suspicions were roused ; it was evident he must have some motive for his conduct ; could it be that he wished to supplant his brother, that he was trying to make her reverse the determination which was so greatly against his interest ? Surely he could not hope she would go from her word ? and the old lady

drew herself up at the very imagination of the possibility of such a thing ; what could it mean ? and perfectly puzzled for once in her life to know what motive such conduct could have, she rang the bell to give a few final orders to the house-keeper for a dinner-party which she had arranged for the morrow ; she was quite tired of Luke's company, alone, and though she disliked the trouble of entering into society now, and had for some time given up going out, she had determined on giving a series of parties, and had asked one or two families, and some young men who were acquaintances of Luke's—he had no friends—to spend two or three days.

Luke Leigh had played his cards with unwonted care and cleverness, for the assembling of the very people who were expected was one of the objects of his visit, and one of the motives of his unheard of attention to the fancies and wishes of another.

Mrs. Vernon had, amongst others, received

the following answer to her invitation to Mr. Langton and his daughter.

“MY DEAR MADAM,”

“As Charlotte is now staying in Yorkshire, perhaps you will allow me to bring, in her place, my youngest daughter, Emily, she has just left the school-room, and I am anxious to introduce her to my kind old friend and neighbour,

“Yours truly,

“JOHN LANGTON.”

Mrs. Vernon had been much disappointed, for Charlotte Langton was an established favourite of hers, and she had no fancy for shy young ladies just out of the school-room; however she comforted herself with the idea that it made no difference in the table; which always appears of more importance than anything else, in the country: if there are but the right number of ladies and gentlemen, what does it matter what they

are ? agreeable or not ; for in the country I verily believe that people meet to eat, and not to talk.

The distance being but short, those who were to remain the night, arrived at the dinner hour instead of dressing in the house. Mrs. Vernon and Luke were awaiting their arrival.

“ Good gracious Luke how well you look ! an evening dress most certainly improves you ; you must do the honours for me Luke, of course, as master of the house.”

And he, poor fellow, actually shrank away at this unlucky speech, for he was *not* to be the master of that house !

And Mrs. Vernon never found out what she had said, but went on carelessly.

“ I’m sorry Charlotte Langton is not coming, what sort of creature is the young one, Luke ?”

“ You will see her aunt yourself,” answered he in so odd a voice, that she looked in his face, but in that dim, before dinner, light, she could not see his features ; the fact being that

he had studiously placed himself in the shade.

“Pray have you seen her, Luke?”

“Yes,” said the nephew, as if the question choked him.

“Is she very shy? I hope not,” said the aunt.

“Shy? is she shy?” repeated he as if he did not know the meaning of the words, “yes, shy; no certainly not shy.”

And Mrs. Vernon again looked in his face.

“Mr. and Miss Langton,” announced the butler.

“It is a long time since you have been so gay as this, my dear old friend,” said the still handsome Mr. Langton, “pray let me ask your friendship for my daughter.”

The moment Mrs. Vernon looked at her she understood all Luke's odd tones and odder ways, for Emily Langton, as she smiled and put her tiny hand out to meet that of the old lady, was everything that can be fancied most lovely and fascinating. A tall and elegant figure, with a child's face, finished

manners with a child's merry laugh ; the grace, the simplicity, the thoughtlessness of a child of five, with all the attractions of a woman : such was the chosen of Luke Leigh.

How very odd it is that plain and disagreeable men do always choose, and generally win, the prettiest and most fascinating women !

"Emily Langton shy !" The old lady could not help smiling at her fears upon that head, as the young girl threw herself down upon the sofa by her, and talked away with all the undoubting confidence of a pet ; too lively, and too laughing, she might be, but look for hours, and you could find no other fault.

"Dear Mrs. Vernon ; papa told me I should like you, but I had no idea you would be so delightful," she had all but said, "such a duck of an old lady," and she did say so before long !

"Are you coming to the Archery Ball ?" she continued ; (such a question to Mrs. Vernon ;) "do come, I'm sure you would enjoy

it so ; I shall ; it is my first ball, just fancy that ; if you would only go I do declare I should like it twice as well ; I've lost my heart to you."

In spite of the pretty nonsense that she talked : the laughing affection of her sweet blue eyes, the dancing of her sunny curls, the elastic movements of her slight figure had such an irresistible charm about them, that the old lady became, like every one who saw her, too much fascinated to judge her harshly.

When the next party made their appearance, Emily left the sofa to an older guest, and threw herself into a seat with a pretty air of childish amusement, at finding herself in such a respectable arm chair ; and Luke Leigh spoke to her.

It was a very strange and amusing spectacle to Mrs. Vernon, to see him act the lover : a curious problem in natural philosophy to see the eminently selfish man in love ; she watched the careful politeness of the indolent, the trembling anxiety of the bullying Luke Leigh, and smiled ; half bitterly, and half

rejoicing that he had a heart, a fact that she had disbelieved for years.

Emily Langton laughed and talked, and teased, and plagued her lover, for he had already hinted he loved her, and sported with his impetuous feelings, little imagining with what edge tools she was so carelessly toying in playing with the temper of Luke Leigh! to her he was all softness, all acquiescence, she had not an idea of his real character, and what girl can have a glimmering of the truth, when a man is so bent on deceiving her.

“My goodness; what a dreadfully rude speech for you; to own you don’t like ladies, to say that, to me.”

“I do *not* like ladies,” replied Luke, “not even you; I do not *like* you Emily; oh, if I might but tell you once, that—”

“Dinner is ready” announced the servant close in their ears.

And as the discomfited gentleman walked off as master of the house, to give his arm to an old lady, who was quite deaf, he left

Emily laughing at the unromantic conclusion to his speech.

In the course of her three days' visit Mrs. Vernon became convinced, that when a selfish man is in love, he is more in love than other people ; but this is not wonderful, as in fact any one deviation from natural character is always carried to extremes, and besides, such a person is more eager in the search after what will contribute to the fulfilment of his own wishes, and will therefore make greater sacrifices to attain the object of them.

Luke Leigh was, hour by hour, still more in love, but he did not intend to propose till after the Archery ball, for he wished to see if others would admire her as much as he did, and he had no fears of a rival ; he wished to have his choice confirmed, but had been too much accustomed to carrying every point he wished to gain, to have a doubt of his own success.

Emily was decidedly pleased and flattered ; he was the first man who had ever been so devoted to her, and the advantage he gained

by that, was very great ; she really thought him very delightful, and found it all highly amusing ; she was therefore in the highest spirits when she entered the ball-room, for in addition to the general enjoyment of the evening, she was sure of one source of gratified vanity.

With her appearance Luke was more than satisfied, she was the belle of the room ; every one asked to be introduced to her, every one spoke in raptures of her ; a regiment of dragoons were quartered in the neighbourhood and the whole of the officers, without exception, fell in love with her, at least they told her so ! The man who meant to be her husband, looked on with a proud and swelling heart, but even he had sense enough to see he had no time to lose ; he must secure his prize before she found out her own value ; he watched her flirting right and left, so merrily, but he had no idea of being jealous, he thought too highly of himself for that ; and then she knew him so much better than she did the other flatterers round her, that she

turned to him with greater favour ; as they were dancing the last dance of the evening, she declared to him in a mock confidence,

“ Only one thing to-night has disappointed me, if it had not been for that, I should have enjoyed it beyond words ; but I could not make Mrs. Vernon come, and that was very hard upon me—people always do what I ask them !”

“ It would be quite impossible to resist a wish of yours,” said Luke, gazing fondly on the lovely young face, looking out from its waving curls, and he spoke with a deep sincerity—just for the moment.

She looked up in his face with a keen and enquiring look—and she believed him.

The next morning Emily Langton promised to take Luke Leigh, for better, or for worse, as it might happen.

Mr. Langton was much pleased ; he thought it was a match too good to be refused : and so the accepted Luke wrote to his father, to whom he had not thought it neces-

sary to own his attachment till now ; and Emily wrote to her sister.

“ YOU DEAR STEADY OLD CHARLOTTE,

“ Though you have been engaged so long ; I shall be married before you ; I fancy I see your face ! I, little I, am going to be married to Mr. Leigh. We saw him last spring, do you remember ? when he was staying with that darling old lady, you are so fond of, Mrs. Vernon ; I didn't know her then, but I do now, and really I am as fond of her as if she was my aunt, which she will be, thank goodness ! You had seen Mr. Leigh before the spring, but I had not ; well yesterday he asked me to be his wife, and I said yes ; you have'nt an idea how complimentary he is !—I can't think what you were so solemn about, when James Gray offered to you ; *I* think it all great fun ; and some day, when the old squire is dead, I have never seen him you know, so you need not scold ; when the old squire is gone, we shall

have a beautiful old place, and I am to have such a horse to ride, and Luke has promised me a harp—an odd name, Luke! but that can't be helped. He has written home to ask leave to marry, and he says his father, who has never refused him anything, will not refuse him *me*!

“I am grown so grand and important you can't think; and you may lecture away, dear sis., as much as ever you like, for *you* may think me wrong—He wont. Only imagine how delightful to live with a person all your life, who thinks everything you do is right!

“He really is a very delightful, kind, amiable creature, always agrees with everything I say; and the family diamonds are great beauties.

“It is very strange, and very unlucky, but that dear, darling, old aunt of his, has made his brother Horace heir to all her property. You must remember him; and I recollect we liked him much the best. How one does alter one's opinions, to be sure.

“ And now, dear Charlotte, write me a long lecture in reply, beginning—‘ How can you treat the most important action of your life with such unthinking levity ;’ write anything you please, for I love you deeply and dearly, and I know that you love me ; only I *cannot* think ; you think enough for two ; I am content to live and laugh.

“ Your most affectionate sister,

“ Emily Langton.”

“ Postscript—I keep for this and your most secret ear the dear delightful fact, that I expect that Mr. Leigh will always let me have my way ! Goodbye.”

So wrote the gay and giddy girl of seventeen, who had never known a care or a cross, and never imagined she could meet with either.

Luke on his part sought an interview with Mrs. Vernon, for the purpose of informing her of his hoped-for happiness.

She knew perfectly well what he was going to tell her, but she let him look silly, and remain awkwardly silent, as long as it suited him—she would not help him in the least, for she rather enjoyed his embarrassment.

“Well, nephew, have you anything to say,” she asked at last.

“You must have perceived, dear madam,”

“Oh, yes—I see what you came here for!” said the old lady, drily.

“And you have seen my excuse, dear aunt,” replied he, with more readiness than usual.

Love certainly reverses a person’s character—it makes the stupid witty, and it silences the talker.

“Well?” asked Mrs. Vernon, shortly.

“You must have seen my attachment.”

“Any one could see it, Luke.”

“I have long loved her,” said he, energetically.

“How long?” asked the aunt.

“Since the spring,” answered Luke,

gravely—"since last April, when I was here and saw her first ; I felt she must be mine, *I* could not be happy without *her*."

"Will *she* be happy with *you*?" asked the old lady, quaintly.

"Happy ! I hope so, I will make her happy," said he, in a heartfelt tone.

"You men always imagine you can make a woman happy," said Mrs. Vernon—"but you don't always do it."

"She shall be the happiest creature in the world ; so young, so pliant, I can make of her what I choose ; and she will have no will but mine."

"Don't be too sure of that," said the old lady ; "she is the most fascinating creature in the world, but not the cipher you suppose."

"She is perfection," said the lover ; "and when she promised to be mine I felt life had no more to give !"

"She has accepted you, has she ?" asked Mrs. Vernon, with an intentional touch of astonishment in her voice.

“She has this morning; and I hope, dear aunt, that you will approve my choice; and wish me joy.”

“I think you are a lucky man—a very lucky man,” replied the old lady; “but she is young and giddy, Luke; she has both wit and will; be kind to her, be tender with her, as you have been hitherto, and all will go well; but treat her harshly, show her your temper, Luke, and I, for one, shall not expect to see you happy. However, with this warning, I shall wish you joy. I shall take care that one thousand pounds shall wait your acceptance on your wedding day; and from this hour your pretty Emily shall be a neice to me.”

The old lady could not help being satirical, neither could she help being kind, upon this interesting occasion.

“Then I may bring her to you to-morrow?” said the nephew, delighted that he had got over this formidable interview.

“It is for me to call there,” replied Mrs.

Vernon ; “ but your father, Luke, what will he say ?”

“ He never denies me anything.”

“ You don’t wait for his gifts ; you take with the strong hand—take first and ask after, is your motto, Luke.”

“ In this case I have done so,” said the nephew, feeling rebuked by this, the simple truth ; “ but my father is so anxious I should marry, at my age—past thirty—it is really time.”

“ Why didn’t you tell him you thought of Emily ; I know you have not done so,” said Mrs. Vernon, coldly.

“ I thought,” stammered Luke, “ that it would spare me a mortification if I was refused, and I know he will be too happy to give his consent. Even as things stand now.” and he ventured to glance at Mrs. Vernon in a reproachful manner, “ it will be easy to manage all business matters ; there may be a difficulty with Horace, perhaps.”

“ Fear none with him,” replied his aunt ;

“ he is not selfish, Luke, *he* will not stand in the way of another’s happiness.”

“ Then all will be easily managed, and I may soon call Emily my wife,” said Luke, as he wrung his aunt’s hand in thanks for her kindness, and hastily leaving the room he mounted a horse and galloped off to Langton Park.

A few days past, rather anxious ones to Mr. Langton, as his daughter had but little fortune, and the heir of Leigh was really so good a match that his father might possibly object to Emily as a daughter-in-law ; when the expected letters did arrive Emily caught up hers.

“ A scolding from Charlotte,” was her laughing exclamation, and she found what she expected—not to say deserved—in answer to her flighty letter ; but the answer was so kind and sisterly, so truly affectionate that after reading it she kissed it again and again.

Luke left his aunt, to read his letters, not that he had smallest misgiving as to their

contents ; but simply because he preferred being alone, his father's ran thus :

“ MY DEAREST BOY,

“ So you are going to be married ; I had no idea, nor had your mother, that you were thinking of any one, but we always like you to do as you please, and you ought to marry. I dare say your choice is a very pretty girl, you have such good taste in everything. If your poor, dear aunt had not been so infatuated about Horace you would have been differently situated on this occasion ; but, thank God, you will do very well, and Leigh is large enough to hold us all. I think your brother must be asked to give up something towards the settlements ; by and bye we must go to London, and talk it all over with him. You must come here to go up with me, for I am old and shaky, Luke, not what I was. We must have your pretty Emily to stay with us, my boy, your mother is writing to that effect, we will make much of her, we never had a daughter. I do not think of giving my consent, you know you have it without asking ; what you think best is always right in your old father's eyes. Give my kind love to your aunt, I dare say she will do something handsome for you—rather sharp your aunt ! but very good in the main, only she certainly is very prejudiced—I have written to Mr. Langton,

I have known him so long that it is quite a pleasure to have his daughter for mine—glad you chose her—I remember her mother—very fine woman too—liked her myself once, only I never told your mother, would'nt matter if I did, now she's dead and gone, poor thing ! I wish you joy, my boy, you ought to marry ; I hope she's a good temper, Luke, a cross wife is the Devil—not that I know much about it—I don't think your dear mother ever said no in her life if I said yes ! Well, I wish you happy, nothing on my part shall be wanting. Thank God I have never been extravagant ! I have paid off, as you know, that mortgage on the home farm, and the Old Leigh acres are clear for you, my boy. You will have to pay double postage for this, but never mind for once—long letter for me, but my heart is very full.

“ I am your most affectionate father,

“ FRANCIS LEIGH.”

Even Luke was touched with this kind and hearty reception of the unexpected daughter-in-law he had announced to his father, and his heart almost smote him when he thought he had given him no hint of his intentions, but he soon turned from the unwonted contemplation of a fault of his own,

to the idea of the pride and delight with which he should show to his father and mother the prize he had won ; one half of Emily's power over him arose from gratified pride.

Mr. Leigh's consent was couched in very handsome terms to Mr. Langton ; there was a letter from Mrs. Leigh to Emily with which she danced about in delight before she could sit down to answer it, but when she did calm herself sufficiently, she penned so pretty and feeling an epistle, that no one who had read her letter to her sister would have believed her capable of writing it.

Sweet Emily Langton, in good hands, might have been very near perfection : as it was she was very happy—for the time being. Everything went smoothly, Luke kept his temper, and Mrs. Vernon kept her own council ; though a dozen times she felt inclined to open Emily's eyes to her fond lover's character ; but she did not ; she hoped that real affection would improve and elevate him into something more worthy of her. The

old lady welcomed her to her heart so warmly that, the next time she saw her, Emily flung her arms round her neck, and kissing her declared that—

“She was such a duck of an aunt, she loved her quite as much as she did Luke.”

CHAPTER VI.

It was quite an affecting scene Luke Leigh's arrival at home ; his old mother threw herself into his arms and fairly sobbed aloud ; whilst the squire, with his ruddy face and his eyes full of tears, stood grasping his hand in his own. They both doted upon Luke to an extraordinary degree, and this prospect of his marriage—his bringing home a wife, was full of deep and stirring emotion to them.

Luke thought it all “ great humbug ;” but he allowed himself passively to be

kissed by his mother, and slapped on the back by his father, and then took his old seat by the fire upon a chair he had carefully chosen for his own especial comfort, placed his feet fairly on the fender, and then began with the full tide of a lover's self-congratulation to describe his Emily. The old people listened, and their faces lighted up with pleasure as he went on.

"She must be worthy of you, I do think," exclaimed the squire.

"How I shall love her!" said the gentle Mrs. Leigh.

"And you'll live here, my boy?" said the old man, in a delighted tone.

"Why I'm afraid we must," said Luke, in a voice which seemed to say, that is the worst of it—"I don't see how it can be otherwise."

He quite forgot the unkindness of the speech, and never saw the sudden chill upon his father's beaming face.

"I am afraid you must," said the poor squire, instantly adopting, as he always did,

the views of his darling son, let them be what they might ; yet he felt hurt that this necessity should be a painful one to Luke.

“ You can’t, sir, I suppose, come down with quite enough, to give us such a home as Emily must have ?” enquired the son.

“ And you would rather be independent of us, Luke—leave the old house to be a solitude, when we had hoped to have it bright with you and her ; and your good mother there and I had thought to see our grandchildren running here and there through the old rooms. And you don’t wish to live with us ?” said the poor, disappointed father.

“ You can’t, sir, give us enough ?” enquired Luke again, in his hard voice.

“ I did think,” said the weak-minded squire, “ you would have liked it, Luke.”

“ Liked what ?” said he ; both were so full of their separate, indeed opposite, views that they could hardly understand one another now.

“ Liked to have lived with us,” said the

old man, who really could not forget the bitter disappointment his son's words and manner were to him.

"Oh, I should like it very well indeed," said Luke; "of course—if we can't have a separate establishment; but for young people it doesn't do so well to live with old ones. You would be deucedly—I mean, I beg your pardon, mother—we should be often in your way; it's very kind of you, and all that sort of thing, but perhaps Emily might not like it—she and my mother might not get on so well as could be wished."

"Is she *such* a bad temper?" asked the squire.

"Bad temper!" laughed Luke—"she is an angel."

"Then why the devil shouldn't she get on with your mother, who I will say for her, with all her faults," and here he nodded cheerfully at her, "is just as good a woman and as gentle, as ever came into a house. *She* wont quarrel if Emily doesn't, will you

mama ?” and he smiled pleasantly at her, and gave her another nod.

“ Why, I don’t know,” said Luke—“ two mistresses of a house, you see—I shouldn’t like *my* wife to be in the back-ground.”

“ She need not be that,” said Mrs. Leigh, speaking for the first time—“ she can be housekeeper, or anything she pleases, so that you are but here, and happy, Luke.”

He never even thanked her ; he was so used to all this self-forgetfulness for him, he never valued it.

“ Time enough to settle all that, mother, when I know ~~that~~ that we *must* live here,” said the cold, selfish voice of the son, going as he always did straight at his own wishes without a moment’s consideration for anybody. “ What I want to know, sir, and have asked twice without any kind of answer is this : is there any probability of your *choosing* to do so much for me on this event of my marriage as would allow me to give Emily a home ?”

“ *Choosing to do !*” said the poor Squire,

bitterly hurt, for somehow or other his own warm and affectionate feelings had been worked up to such a pitch that he felt the *hardness* of Luke's words and ways, more than he had ever done in his life—"choosing to do!" repeated he, "as if there was anything in the world I would'nt choose to do for you, that I could! How can you say such things?"

"I have said nothing, father," replied Luke, balancing his foot on the fender, "except ask a plain question."

"Well, well! it is sooner asked than answered," said the father, "I had so made up my mind that you would of course live at the Leigh, and that we should all be so happy here together, that I cannot say that I am prepared to tell you how much I could give, or spare rather; for I would give you all if I could; you know it; but for that, you must wait a little, Luke, not very long though, for I am not what I was; only I should just like to see my grandson in the old house

before I leave its roof myself—I should like that——”

“ Pray don’t talk so !” said Mrs. Leigh, “ you do it often now—how can you like to make me miserable ; you’re just as well as ever——”

But she gave a sharp glance at the old man as she said this, and felt, with a pang at her heart, that he did not look so very well ; he had so long lived, or rather vegetated without a feeling more keen than could be produced by tenants and crops, and bailiffs, and farms, and stock ; his worst afflictions had been a little falling off in his rents now and then, once in a few years ; so that the strong emotions which had been crowding upon him lately about his idolized son had evidently been too much for him.

Poor Mrs. Leigh became suddenly aware that there was change, a sad and serious change in her husband’s looks as he sat there with his low but open forehead wrinkled up, his face as it were suddenly fallen in, and that indescribable expression about the

mouth which is generally a sign of something wrong; she saw all this as he sat deep in the thought of what he could spare for his ungrateful son, and changes which were in general concealed by his smiling and jovial expression, became ten times more visible in consequence of this unwonted look of thought and care.

There is no pang to an affectionate heart, like Mrs. Leigh's, to equal that produced by such a discovery as this, especially when the alteration we suddenly perceive takes place in one not young; we cling beyond expression to the person we love, and feel not only that we may, but that we *must* lose them before long. From that unlucky moment, poor Mrs. Leigh was troubled with a slow but wearing anxiety, she was always on the watch for little things; she never felt secure.

Luke sat there silently, he felt quite sulky, his father and his mother both looking grave and sad; he really did not see what it was all about; it was a kind of

personal insult; he had so long been accustomed to see all sunshine around him, that even this partial and momentary gloom made him quite cross, and he vented his temper as usual—

“ Really if I had known my going to be married, my going to make myself happy was to make every one else unhappy, I really should have thought twice before I ventured on such a step—very uncomfortable we all are, that’s very certain, but what about I hav’nt an idea.—You, my dear father, are always saying you would do anything in the world for me, but when I ask for something tangible, a simple allowance (certainly it must be a handsome one) to marry upon, I meet nothing but black looks—one would actually imagine I was wrong.”

“ ’Tis’nt that, my dear boy, ’tis’nt that, you don’t see that I’m disappointed, that I’m afraid I sha’nt see half enough of you, that I can’t bear to part with you—” and the tears stood again in the old man’s eyes ; but this time they were not tears of joy.

“Nonsense,” said Luke impatiently, “you can do without me surely ; but the thing is quite unsettled still, I’m waiting for my answer.”

“Why,” said the father, “I must have time to think it over—I can’t arrange things in my own mind—I’m not so quick as I used to be, by any means ; but the Leigh is an expensive place to keep up—you know that—your brother has two hundred a year still—I cut him down to that when your poor aunt—ah ! dear me, well that *was* a pity, and then, my dear boy, *we* must live—and altogether I don’t see how I could well allow you more than—I am afraid you won’t find it enough, for young people are thoughtless, and tis’nt every wife that manages like Mary there,” and he smiled over at her his kindly but unintellectual smile, “I am afraid, dear Luke, with justice to the old place, and the old people all about us ; if I part with many of the old servants I must pension them off you see.”

“ I don’t see that at all !” said Luke, “ Service is no inheritance.”

“ It was in my time,” said the Squire gravely, for this was one of his fixed ideas.

“ And Horace,” he interrupted, “ I think, with his fine prospects, he might give up to me that paltry two hundred, nothing to him but much to me as a married man——” argued Luke with his blind selfishness.

“ I have no doubt he will,” said Mrs. Leigh, “ dear Horace is always ready to give up to you—bless him !——”

The mother’s heart did her young son some justice.

“ Well, as I was explaining,” said the Squire, “ with all these calls I don’t see how I can allow you more than a thousand——”

Luke’s brow grew black.

“ Or say fifteen-hundred a year, that is a stretch, my boy, I dare not say more, and ought not to say that ; but anything to see you happy, Luke, and know it is my doing !——”

The lowering brow did not clear even at this heart warm kindness ; he did not feel the sacrifice.

“ It’s not enough,” said the harsh voice, although he knew that it was half the old man’s income, indeed, more than the half.

“ I could’nt live upon it.”

“ Indeed !” suggested Mrs. Leigh.

He waved her into silence.

“ Excuse me, mother, but I must have my horses, dogs, a home too fit for *her*, and society for her to shine in—I would’nt and could’nt live upon fifteen hundred—a mere pittance after *all this*.”

And the Leigh acquired a new value in his eyes after the picture he had raised in his own mind of cramped-incomes and hired country houses.

“ *All this !*” said the old Squire, catching with delighted eagerness at the expression and the look, “ *all this*, my boy, is yours and hers—all that you’ve been accustomed to you still can have ;” and he rubbed his

hand with glee, "better than hired houses, better for a Leigh to be at Leigh, that's it, my boy, ha! ha! you wouldn't like to leave it after all; there are not many such places in the whole county, Luke, you know it—Leigh is worth the having and the living in—isn't it after all, my boy? I had you there, and I shall have you after all; you know I couldn't give you more, and so if that won't do I have you—caught you, my boy of boys—you must, *must* live here; not so despicable even for pretty misses—better than Langton—I know Langton well—didn't often go there though—because—I told your mother all about that—yes, yes, this is a better place than Langton, much; she'll find that out, and we shall not be parted, and the old place will not be desolate—and little feet shall run about in the old hall—Thank God, I think I hear them now!"

And the old Squire chuckled and laughed in the extremity of his delight.

"Ah, ha! my boy," he said, once more

clapping him on the back—" You *must* live here."

" Well, I'm afraid I must," said Luke gaining a shadow less of cold ungraciousness from the over-powering joy of his poor father, and smiling a little as he said it " I only hope it will not be a bore—to all of us," he added to himself.

And the good Squire wrung his hand, and his mother got up and kissed his forehead, and though Luke was still sulky, he could not help feeling that his father was right, and that it would be better to live in the old house after all, less trouble and more comfort decidedly—no doubt about it, and Emily should do just as she liked, just as *he* liked—that is ;—he was quite determined about that, and so all was peace and happiness again in the oak-panelled room at Leigh ; for so its master loved to call it—he, good old man, sat smiling with the joy of what he thought a victory, and Mrs. Leigh recovering from her fears gazed at him till she thought they were all fancies.

“ He did *not* look so ill, that *was* a blessing,” Luke had, in some degree, recovered the little temper that he ever possessed, and they sat there and talked ; no one of the small party seemed to remember that they had had, what, for that quiet room, was quite a scene, and no one of the three seemed to feel the exquisite selfishness that had been so unblushingly displayed by Luke ; the Squire had, in his joy, forgotten the pain he felt at the beginning of their discussion, the mother thought that her own dear boy was right : of course he wished for a house of his own, it was so natural : of course one half his father’s income could not be enough, poor fellow : of course the next best thing for him, was living there ; and she could give up everything to Emily—Oh, yes ! that would be quite delightful, and then what a companion it would be for her, a lovely, merry girl, rather fatiguing—parties, and all that ; but never mind, Luke would be happy.—They never saw his faults they were so used to them !

The Leighs were old and respectable members of the Squirearchy of England. To declare that there were Leighs long before there were Cotton Lords and Railways Kings, is not saying much, but before one third of our noble names existed, and before Baronets were so much as invented, there were Leighs at Leigh : one rather felt inclined to wonder why a family in no way remarkable for anything but weakness and bad temper should have been preserved from generation to generation, when so many far nobler and more useful branches of the human tree were dead and gone for ever. I believe the truth is that mediocrity is of a lasting nature, and certainly, in their family, there had not often been mind enough to do them any fatal injury, the sword had never worn the scabbard out.

There had never been a title in the family, and never a blot, never an honour, and never a disgrace, they had been from father to son for many a year more remarkable for a kind of stupid yet violent disposition than

for anything else, they had never done any harm, and seldom done any good !

The only exceptions known to this family character had been a spirited though secret Jacobite, who had, more from extreme good fortune than prudence, just escaped forfeiting the estate, and in later times Mrs. Vernon and her youngest nephew had apparently inherited from her shrewd and clever grandmother, a degree of intellectual superiority as yet unheard of in a Leigh !

A few days from this time the Squire and his son arrived in London to talk matters over with Horace—as yet no one had sacrificed anything—the father and his heir were equally pleased and satisfied ; the sacrifice must come from Horace ; if he would make it.

Again a family party of three sat round, but this time it was round a table covered with parchments, deeds, conveyances, and all the strange contrivances of law, to make a man's property his own !

Horace Leigh sat with his head raised

in a haughty attitude he looked, worried ; for he was that day not much unlike a noble stag at bay ; he felt himself to be the superior creature, and yet he felt that he must yield.

So he sat there listening patiently to his old father's dull and slow expositions of what he saw at a glance, and could have explained in a sentence, patiently and respectfully listening—to his own injury. There was a struggle in his mind, a very bitter one, he had a proud spirit, above all in money matters, and he was puzzled how to act ; he had so much at stake—he too was wishing to marry. Should he put forth his claims ? that was the question in his mind—his income was not enough to marry a Walgrave now ; it surely would be vain, just worse than useless, a mere self-humiliation without aim to ask his father for more just then. Such were the difficulties spread out before his path—the every-day path of life is full of such—when at that moment his father

asked him even to give up that which he had !

“ Ah, by-the-bye, Horace, I think you will not want that two hundred a year I’ve been allowing you, so much as Luke, poor fellow ; a married man you know has many an expense you bachelors escape.”

Horace Leigh did not answer ; he was debating in his mind what he should do : even if he declared his earnest wish to marry, (he had a right to do that surely ; he was a son as well as the more favoured one)—still it would be no use, there was another real obstacle, almost insurmountable to that upright, and generous, and honourable mind ; too full of delicacy that feeling might be, for it was but a feeling which stood between him and his happiness ; but to him it was as great a barrier as a mountain range.

So as the matter stood, was it worth while to own the wish he had, and so just try what they would do for him—asking of him as they were—so much.

There was a something mean in trying when he knew so well what the result would be, were he to put his interests in the balance with his brother's.

A bitterness came over him—"yes, he would test them yet this once."

"Father," he said, with startling energy ; "I know this is an unlucky moment I have chosen, but my heart is full, and I must speak ; you are about to make Luke happy in his affections.—I too am attached ; deeply, and dearly do I love her ; it may be years before—I hope it may be so—before I have the means of marrying ; will you help me, my dear father, even me also, to be happy, so little more would do it ?"

"Impossible !" said the Squire, "I must give everything to Luke.—You are provided for."

Poor Horace bowed his head upon his hand and said no more, he was too proud to plead again, and he was sick at heart, both for the struggle and for its results ; his father had been always harsh to him.

“ I can and will do nothing for you ; your share will be enough, and too much,” continued the old squire. “ Poor Luke has only me to look to—so after this year—it might not be quite fair to take it away suddenly—after this day twelvemonth, Horace, your allowance from me ceases.”

“ Not even asked if I will give it up,” said the young man, between his teeth.

“ I may do as I please with my own !” replied the father. “ I should have asked you civilly—indeed I did, only you broke in on us with your own affairs, when Luke’s were in my head, and so I daresay I was cross—you and your lady love must wait until you are what you will be ; the richer of the two.”

“ But now for business,” interrupted Luke, eagerly, for it was for himself he spoke. “ I want it all arranged and done with, since Horace is so kind, for really it is generous of you ;” and his sullen face looked smilingly upon his brother.

“ You shall be happy, Luke, if I cannot

be so," said Horace. "The Edgehill farm on which my future portion was charged at the time of your marriage, father, will not yield the half of it ; I am secured however to the amount of fifteen thousand pounds upon the Home farm—quite secure that ; and *that* I am required to give up—my younger brother's share. Well, I will sign and seal my right away : as Emily has so little fortune, I will give up my claim ; but Luke, remember, Luke, if my aunt Vernon should forget her promise, you must promise to restore my rights. With that condition get the papers prepared. I shall be ready when you will."

The weaknesses of Horace were all good.

"That's right, my boy ; I thank you," said the squire warmed into something like affection for his young and noble-minded son ; "you have done my old heart good."

"Thank you ; this is a kindness done to me and *mine* !" said Luke, in a voice of some feeling.

"Ah, well," said Horace, "if I have

taken an anxiety from you for the future ; when you are happy, Luke, remember that though I too love, and am beloved, *I cannot marry*—but I wish you joy.”

CHAPTER VII.

THREE months have past without any event having befallen the Leighs worthy of a particular notice—and it is now the height of the season ; all London is mad with gaiety ; every inmate of every house is struggling to wear an appearance which will very probably be expiated in economies and embarrassments for the remainder of the year in some cases ; and in others will require more rest of mind and body than the young and gay, or even the old and worn out have time or will to take.

A little month ago Lady Walgrave was sitting as much out of the draught as she could, in a very elegant room ; truly the givers of the fête were not the most distinguished people of the fashionable world ; but they gave such balls, that young ladies, and such champagne suppers, that young gentlemen, were only too happy to attend and quiz them.

“ Who is that person, have you any idea, who is dancing with Louisa ?” enquired the watchful Lady Walgrave of the anxious mama who was sitting next her.

“ Mr. Green,” replied the lady, after a moment’s contemplation of the gentleman in question.

“ Is that *the* Mr. Green ?” eagerly enquired another chaperone, who was Lady Walgrave’s neighbour on the other side.

“ Certainly,” replied Mrs. Dalhousie, who never liked to be supposed not to know people, and who inferred from the tone of the last speaker that she ought to know him—
“ certainly,—I suppose so,” she added to

herself, to quiet her conscience, after a most uncommon fashion.

“May I enquire,” asked Lady Walgrave of the lady, “why he is to be considered *the* Mr. Green.”

“The greatest catch in London, my son tells me,” replied the lady; “he has come into the most enormous fortune. Nothing but City uncles, grandfathers, or so on, but a miracle of riches. He seems amazingly struck with your eldest daughter,” smiled the lady, in conclusion; “and he is the richest commoner in England.”

“Indeed!” said Mrs. Dalhousie, “I happened to hear some one call him Green—or I should not have known his name.”

“Indeed!” said Lady Walgrave quietly, and at the same moment as her friend; but the information made no slight impression on her.

The party was breaking up, and Lady Walgrave looked round for her daughters, Isabelle was sitting down in a quiet corner, listening to Horace Leigh, but on his face

and in his manner was a visible constraint, amounting even to awkwardness, and upon her fair face was a look of worry which had no right to such a gentle resting place ; appearances there were by no means satisfactory, so Lady Walgrave looked for Louisa, Mr. Green, *the* Mr. Green was bending over her in an attitude of unmistakeable admiration, he was in fact soliciting an introduction to herself ; the young couple rose, approached her, Louisa introduced her partner who was received in the most obliging manner, and Lady Walgrave assured him,

“ She should be delighted to see him whenever he liked, in Cavendish Square.”

The Mr. Green handed the fair Louisa into the carriage, and the manœuvering mamma was more than content.

“ My dear,” said she to Sir Josiah the next morning, “ we must have a dinner party, Mr. Green has been very attentive to dear Louisa and I wish to ask him to the house.”

“ My love,” replied the husband, he always said my love when he was going to

annoy her. "You would save yourself some trouble if you would have that sentence lithographed with a blank space merely for the name—I have heard it so often, it would be a relief to see it written down—I would however advise one small addition—Postscript, Money—*ad libitum*."

"You may consider it witty to laugh at your wife, when she is doing all she can for the advantage of your daughters;" indignantly replied Lady Walgrave, "but the postscript would be true enough in this case, for it is *the* Mr. Green!"

She fully expected to overwhelm and silence Sir Josiah, with this remarkable name, and was by no means prepared to hear,

"And who is he?"

"I don't exactly know," she felt obliged to add, "except that he has just come into a colossal fortune, and you may remember seeing it mentioned in the paper."

"*That* Mr. Green, oh ask him by all means," sarcastically observed the husband, "only I can't let him have my Isabelle, if I

spare her to anyone it must be to that clever fine young fellow, Leigh."

"You need not be afraid," observed his wife, "they are neither of them likely to deprive you of your darling."

"So much the better for me," said Sir Josiah, "she has time enough, and to spare."

"Upon consideration, Sir Josiah, I think we had better ask our very best set to meet this Mr. Green, it will give him a good impression of us; and will be quite as well for him should anything eventually occur, he is very much struck, I can assure you, with Louisa."

"Do as you please, you know I never interfere," broke in Sir Josiah, "and now, bless me, I have an appointment with Simmons at eleven. I shall be late," and off he hurried to Murdoch's manufactory, and was soon altogether absorbed in matters far more interesting to him than his wife's plots and plans.

Mr. Green called; Mr. Green bowed to them in the Park; Mr. Green came into their box at the opera.

“Don’t you think it rather odd mamma,” observed the gentle Isabelle who was not without sense and observation, and who was not so dazzled by the reputed wealth of their new acquaintance, as her very worldly mother “Does it not strike you as rather odd that Mr. Green appears to know so few people, I wonder who he is.”

“City connexions he has, I heard,” replied Lady Walgrave, “nothing very great of course ; he is not known at present, but we can have the *éclat* of introducing the new star.”

“But dear mamma, Mr. Leigh says he does not think him much like a gentleman.”

“Mr. Leigh’s opinion matters little to me,” said the mamma indignant at her daughter’s very unusual interference, but nevertheless she determined on enquiring more about him, for Mr. Green was so enchanted at the encouragement with which his admiration was met, had been so smiled upon at the many meetings which had already taken place in Cavendish Square, in private

boxes at the play, that a proposal was evidently fast approaching.

“Pray my dear Lady Walgrave,” asked a particular friend, “who in the name of wonder is that little man you are taking with you everywhere.”

“*The* Mr. Green,” mysteriously whispered she.

“Indeed,” replied the lady putting up her eye-glass, “perhaps you will bring him to us on the 28th.”

The dinner-party went off very successfully, a very distinguished set were gathered round Sir Josiah’s hospitable board, and one and all occasionally eyed Mr. Green; he was a specimen of a class new to their eyes; and their curiosity was excited by the newspaper puffs—it was the first time they had seen the millionaire.

Lady Walgrave had essentially a vulgar mind, and she had taken care that the appearance of her much courted guest, which was not much in his favour, should be qualified by a knowledge of his identity.

“ He had better print his cards

“ The Green,”

whispered Horace Leigh to Isabelle ; he too had asked, but none of his set had the honour of knowing the new lion.

So Lady Walgrave *pronéd* him to her great and exquisite delight, she being the sole possessor of “ the Green.”

He was not the beau ideal of a lover, certainly not ; very short, with straw-coloured, rebellious hair, light yellow whiskers, light grey eyes—which could not express much if they would—a low, uninteresting forehead, short, fat hands, and a disagreeable voice—it was just as well he was a millionaire.

“ I do assure you, dear mama,” declared poor Louisa, as she sat in her mother’s room that evening after the people were gone, “ I do not believe that I shall be able to accept that little man !”

“ Do not say that, my love, just at the last ; you ought to have made up your mind

upon that point before the matter went so far."

"You hav'nt an idea what he is, dear mama, he has never made love to *you*!" said the poor girl.

"Good looks in a man! what do they signify?" reprovingly observed Lady Walgrave, "I thought a daughter of mine, brought up as you have been, would really have had common sense enough to have no such foolish ideas about appearance!"

"I do not care for that," said Louisa, "but his conversation really is so silly."

"What upon earth is the use of marrying a clever man?" energetically answered Lady Walgrave, "I am sure I am the last woman in the world to wish for a moment to prejudice a child of mine against her own father, but you must see enough in this house to know it is no such great advantage to have a clever husband—he talks of things you cannot understand, he thinks of things of which you cannot remember the names, he undervalues your understanding, considers

you an inferior being, asks all sorts of odd people to dinner because they are clever too, wont attend to you whatever you may have to say, because it *must* be all nonsense, and perhaps at the end of it all—" and the ill-treated wife got quite out of breath—" at the end of it all he frightens you to death, and nearly blows you up—like your poor father ! My dear Louisa be warned—let nothing induce you—come what will—never be tempted by love or money to marry a very clever man !"

This exordium was delivered in the most solemn and natural manner, with the air of a woman who was endeavouring, as an imperative duty, to save her daughter from a miserable fate.

It is highly probable that Sir Josiah would have warned his son if he had had one, with as much earnest anxiety, never to wed a silly woman !

" I only wish that Mr. Green were only in the very least, in any way, one half as good as my dear father ;" sighed Louisa,

“but really such a very plain and stupid, and uninteresting—”

“Uninteresting! You could have said nothing so much in his favour!” said Lady Walgrave in an enthusiastic tone, “I quite congratulate you, dearest.”

“Mama!” said Lousia in a tone of the most unqualified astonishment.

“I speak advisedly;” said the mother in a graver tone; “if you did only know the miseries of having an interesting husband! every one admiring him—every one setting at him—now at the least you have a chance of keeping him to yourself!”

“I should think so indeed!” said the young lady in a voice half-laughing and half-bitter.

“Go on with your objections,” triumphantly observed Lady Walgrave; “you must see how ill-grounded is your last, only imagine, with his wealth if he were handsome, and fascinating too!—in the first place, my dear, he never would have married *you*—there’s something in that! and in the

next place, fancy the smiles of the most beautiful women in London bestowed upon *one's husband*, fancy anything worse if you can—I can't!' and Lady Walgrave appeared to give it up in despair.

"I certainly should feel rather jealous," said Louisa, but she could not help laughing at the idea of all the lovely creatures of the gay world smiling at Mr. Green—she felt quite safe.

"I do assure you my dear," declared the mother, as solemnly as if she were put upon her oath, "the more stupid and ugly a man is; the better for his wife."

The young girl was so profoundly astonished at this doctrine from the lips of one she had been taught to consider almost infallible, that she stared at her in silence—till at last her feelings enabled her to ask,

"Surely not the more stupid he is mama."

"Decidedly," said Lady Walgrave, "I can prove it in a moment! The unfortunate example of your poor father is enough for you in one kind of cleverness, I need say no

more ; you can have lived in this house to very little purpose if it is necessary to say another word, Mr. Simmons here so often, and that creature Murdoch asked to dinner ! but if a man makes himself agreeable to other men ; it is enough to make any woman unhappy, what does he care for his wife, when he can go to mens' dinners, to his club to be made a fuss about ; talking here, and speaking there ! (very odd that talking and speaking should be such different things, but they are,) depend upon it my love, the best chance a woman has of her husband's caring for her society is, the other men not caring for his !”

“ Good gracious !” exclaimed Louisa, perfectly astounded at all these wonderful opinions.

Lady Walgrave apparently could not stop herself, for she went on regardless of the interruption.

“ If a married man is fond of mens' society there is no knowing where it may end—

gambling and racing!" she quite shuddered at the horrid ideas.

"But surely mamma some slight accomplishment, Mr. Green doesn't know, God save the Queen, when he hears it, and when Miss Lawrence was singing so splendidly, he declared he did not mind it in the least."

"Accomplishment is worse than all!" said Lady Walgrave in the tone of an oracle, "if a man sings, he must be accompanied, his wife must stay at home sometimes, and then, Louisa, he must play and sing with other people! I think an accomplished husband really worse than none!"

"And so mamma;" said poor Louisa, "if clever, handsome and accomplished men are sure to make one wretched, it follows as a matter of course that a man who has no temptation to care for the society of men or women because they will not value his, is just the person who would make one happy! —it does not sound well, mother dear," and her eyes filled with tears.

"The more likely to care for you," said Lady Walgrave kindly.

But the idea of this exclusive affection and attention; this continual presence of Mr. Green was not altogether so pleasing to the young girl as could have been wished under her circumstances, and she almost sobbed as she thought of it; a long future life with him as a companion, when she was tired of him already!

"My dear mama I do assure you I don't think I can accept him, and he all but proposed this evening, you hav'nt an idea how weary I am of him *now*."

"That will go off when you are once engaged, you will have so many things to talk of; house, carriages, then he will be choosing you presents, pretty surprises—little surprises of diamonds, my dear child; you will find plenty to amuse you, as the fiancée of a Millionaire!"

"But, dear mama, what happiness can all this give me, if I don't care for *him*?" innocently enquired the daughter.

Lady Walgrave was posed at last, she had been as she considered it, doing her duty as a mother (her duty as a chaperone it was) to the very uttermost in this conversation, bringing the stores of her own opinions and experience to persuade her child into what she thought the happiness of marrying well, "if wealthily then well," is the world's maxim now a days, and now this very simple question puzzled her, and all her eloquence was at fault.

Louisa sat with her long, fair curls drooping round her face on a low stool by the dressing-room fire, and as her mother did not answer, she looked anxiously up in her face with a strangely irresolute expression on her own, the tears were standing in her eyes, and she looked anything but convinced or happy.

"My dearest child," said Lady Walgrave, "a woman's happiness in married life really depends much more upon her husband's caring for her, than upon her being desperately in love with him; you will find your best happiness in making him happy."

The one real and womanly truth contained in the last half dozen words her mother had spoken, touched the young girl's heart, she felt there was something in that; she knew he loved her; she felt she could make him happy, and that gave her a gleam of hope for herself.

"Well, dearest mother," said Louisa, rising languidly, and pushing back her hair with an impatience which was not natural to her, "if I do marry Mr. Green, it will be for his happiness, not mine!"

"It will be for your mother's," said Lady Walgrave, kissing her. "If he is good, and loves you, and is rolling in wealth, you might do worse—a fascinating gambler, par example."

And Louisa Walgrave passed on to her room, with a wan, sad smile, very unsuited to so young a face—and laid her weary head upon her pillow. How blessed a thing it is that sorrow does not keep one awake so much as joy.

The next morning the two sisters had a

long conference on the same interesting subject.

“And so you really mean to have him!” said Isabelle, raising her dark eye-brows in astonishment; “why you told me, Louisa—”

“I had not then heard all mama’s long arguments; she almost proved to me last night that the more ugly, and horrid, and disagreeable a man was the better!”

“Comfortable doctrine for you, dearest, if you *do* marry Mr. Green; but I am sure if he has all this wealth, he is a miser; he hasn’t even a horse, except his own one riding horse; and his connexions must be rather low—he always avoids mentioning them; *I* think it very odd, and so does Horace Leigh.”

“I don’t know what mama *will* say if I don’t marry him!” said poor Louisa, whose awe of her mother had always been great.

“I wouldn’t marry such a horrid little man,” said Isabelle, with sudden energy, “not if I had a dozen of mamas!”

“We cannot tell till we are tried, what

we will do," said Louisa, touching a deep truth unawares.

"We may be married the same day, dear Isabelle," she laughed.

Isabelle burst into tears.

The morning of the 28th arrived, and with it Mr. Green. In the course of that morning he proposed to Louisa, and obtained permission to speak to Lady Walgrave ; Sir Josiah was absent, trying experiments somewhere in the country with Mr. Simmons, so that no business matters were touched upon that day.

Lady Walgrave had a long conversation with Louisa ; and the consequence of it was that Mr. Green was reluctantly but decidedly accepted ; he was asked to dinner, at which he duly appeared, with a bouquet the size of a plate ; and they were all to proceed to the ball together ; Louisa very much out of spirits ; Lady Walgrave delighted ; Isabelle, as angry and indignant as it was possible for her to be ; and poor, ugly little Mr. Green

in a frenzy of astonishment at his own unlooked-for happiness.

The ball was given by Mrs. Campbell, Lady Walgrave's particular friend. She welcomed the party, of two pretty girls and one lion, with distinguishing cordiality—and they past on. The first persons who came forward to greet them were Horace and Frederick Keane ; but Louisa was obliged to decline the offer of a quadrille with the latter, to dance with Mr. Green.

Isabelle had never looked so well as on that evening ; Horace forgot his self-imposed caution and forbearance, and instead of leaving her, as he had done of late to the uninterrupted attentions of the many dangles attracted by her beauty, leaving her in the proud confidence of her absolute indifference to them all : upon this occasion he took his place amongst them, claimed, and kept it.

All coolness seemed to have past away ; his whole air and manner became what it had once been to her ; and with the renewed

hope that “after all he cared for her, sweet Isabelle Walgrave looked more and more lovely ; nothing embellishes a woman so much as the consciousness that she is beloved—provided always it is by the right person. She was considered that night the beauty of the room.

At length, fatigued by all her dancing, she came to her mother’s side for rest.

There had been for some little time a kind of subdued excitement in the room ; and whispers were going round, which were apparently occasioned by the entrée of Lady R—— leaning upon the arm of a distinguished looking young man, who leaving her side, had established himself not far from the Walgraves, and was evidently greatly admiring Isabelle. After a short time the lady he was talking to, who had a slight acquaintance with them, came towards them, followed by the very handsome person who was so evidently somebody. He was perfectly well and quietly attired ; but

his studs were formed of simply set, but most magnificent diamonds.

The lady smiled upon Isabelle, and begged to introduce to her Mr. Green.

“ You must have seen how anxious people are to make his acquaintance,” said she to Lady Walgrave; “ and no wonder; he is a finished gentleman, and moreover it is *the* Mr. Green !”

“ *What* Mr. Green ?” exclaimed poor Lady Walgrave, turning deadly pale.

“ The rich, the newspaper hero, the millionaire,” asserted the lady, in the most smiling manner.

“ Impossible—it cannot be—surely an impostor,” stammered Lady Walgrave, who felt as if she must *scream* if this went on.

“ Impostor !” laughed the lady; “ what an excellent idea—quite witty. I have known him from a child ; and knew his uncle, Mr. Fiddies, the City man, who left him, I don’t know what. But he has been out of the City ; and though now the richest man we know, he has a heart, and_ doesn’t

forget old friends. He left Lady R....., who chooses to patronize him just now, for me;" and the lady fanned herself with great complacency, and walked away to laugh at Lady Walgrave's having thought that Willoughby Green was an impostor!

Poor Lady Walgrave would have given the world to move, to hear, to ask! what could this mean! Was *her Green* an impostor? What a horrible idea! and he engaged to poor Louisa.—She felt that she must faint.

At that moment Mrs. Campbell approached with a grave countenance, and took the vacant seat by her astounded friend.

"My dear Lady Walgrave," said she, "the most extraordinary, the most unaccountable thing has occurred; I never felt so very uncomfortable in my life; but—but—perhaps I did not understand—perhaps you might have made a mistake—but you told me that gentleman was *the* new lion; and Lady R..... has brought, unasked, another gentleman, and says *he* is the Mr. Green

and—and—which in the name of wonder is the right one ?”

An earthquake, with the ground opening at her feet could scarcely have given poor Lady Walgrave greater shocks than she now was receiving.

“ I—I—I—never asked him,” stammered she ; “ but I believe, that is, that—I was—told the gentleman I brought—was *the*—*the* Mr. Green, but—but—”

“ May I ask you, my dear friend, who told you so ?” enquired Mrs. Campbell, pitying the state of extreme, though subdued agitation, in which she found the unfortunate Lady Walgrave.

“ Mrs. Dalhousie,” gasped she faintly.

“ Do you not know that she is famous for saying anything that first enters her head ?” replied Mrs. Campbell. “ No wonder you were—have been mistaken, if she was your informant.”

“ And—and,” gasped Lady Walgrave, “ you do not think *the other* an impostor ?”

“Coming with Lady R——!” indignantly interposed the hostess.

“A mistake,” humbly suggested Lady Walgrave.

“The mistake is *yours*, I fear,” said her dear friend; “but we must hush it up; the ridicule will be too overpowering if the people here find out that there are *two* of *the* Mr. Greens!—That it should happen in my house!” and the poor hostess allowed her own despair to make her forget that of her friend.

At this precise moment her two fair daughters returned to the maternal wing, each with *the* Mr. Green!

Poor Lady Walgrave groaned; but Mrs. Campbell, awkward as were the circumstances, could not restrain a smile.

“Ah! how d’ye do?” said the tall, handsome, *real* Simon Pure, putting out his hand.

To the unspeakable relief of Mrs. Campbell, who really felt annoyed, the little ugly

man *she* thought was an impostor, took the offered hand of the real millionaire.

And there the *two* stood and talked ! till the tall man, bending in the most graceful manner down to Lady Walgrave's ear, said, in a voice which scarcely overpowered the fearful beating in her head —

“ I did not know you were acquainted with my cousin ! ”

The hostess, much delighted at the recognition, disappeared with a slight smile.

Poor Lady Walgrave could stand this no longer ; nature could bear no more. Escorted by Horace Leigh, who had been standing near enough to hear and understand it all, her two daughters escorted by *the two* Greens, she entered her carriage !

Her Mr. Green jumped in ! He had been offered a place by Louisa, hoping to please her mother.

Lady Walgrave, being unable to faint, became enraged — deeply and furiously enraged. She asked a private interview, late as it was, and told the astonished little man that having

discovered her daughter was not sufficiently attached, she begged that he would not apply to Sir Josiah for his consent, and that he would cease his visits to the house.

Five minutes after Louisa heard this, she was frantically waltzing round her own room.

CHAPTER VIII.

“HORACE,” said Blanche, “I’m very glad you are come to-day, you must be lectured; I am angry with you.”

“I know what you would say,” replied her cousin flinging himself into a chair, and leaning his head upon his hand in a weary way, and with a weary look.

“Poor Isabelle,” said Blanche.

“You pity her when you had better pity me,” replied Horace moodily, “if you turn against me, Blanche, what comfort shall I have to look to?”

"I do not blame you, Horace, so much as you may think, but for once, in our long career of friendship, I do not understand you."

"I scarcely understand myself," said Horace, "and mine is no uncommon case. I want your help and your advice, I have so much to say that I can scarcely speak, but I am most unhappy, Blanche."

"Speak on, I'm listening," said she in a very quiet voice, and she too leant forward on the table.

She was indeed a listener, no work, no playing with small things that fall or make small sudden snaps and noises—deep, quiet, calm attention, Blanche Trevor always gave to Horace, and he valued it.

The cousins sat both leaning in the same kind of attitude, they were certainly alike, the same broad foreheads, not too high—high foreheads generally mark the visionary, and these two in their own separate ways had eminently practical minds—broad foreheads with the same deep set, sensible looking

eyes, hers were like his but softer, and above all the likeness was in the broad but finely chiselled mouths, full of sweetness of expression, but also showing signs in her of firmness which were wanting in his—there was more of sensibility in his expression than in hers—she had learnt to controul her feelings, young as she was, and he had not. A stranger would have thought they were brother and sister sitting there, so young and yet so gravely talking, and in that light indeed they stood to one another, or he never would have made a fair young girl the confidante, as he had done, of his deep, but apparently unfortunate attachment—to another.

He did not speak for a few moments, and they were both so absorbed in their own thoughts that neither discovered the silence, his were so perfectly confused, they would not range themselves in words, and hers?—it matters not what they were, they soon merged themselves into a calm, clear interest in all that he might have to say.

“Was ever man so hampered?” impatiently exclaimed Horace Leigh at last, “I’m in new toils since we last spoke upon this matter, Blanche—my father is about to take away my poor allowance.”

“Just like his usual conduct,” replied Blanche with her eyes flashing with indignation, “when is that to be?”

“Within a year; another hope is gone with that!”

“Did you not speak, did you not tell your father?” she could not quite finish the sentence, but it has been remarked that English people seldom do.

“I told him all, I begged for it, and you best know what I must feel—in asking him for money!”

“Well?” asked Blanche.

“It was refused—roughly refused.”

“Indeed,” said Blanche, suddenly turning crimson; she had discovered a remedy for that, but would not mention it, lest it should chance to fail.

“And that is not the worst,” said Horace,

“and yet I will not regret it.—I have given away my birthright, Blanche—not sold it though, I’m proud to say.”

“I do not understand?” enquired she.

“I have signed away my right to the younger children’s share, which of course centred in me,” said Horace.

“It was like you,” said Blanche, “most generous, but weak.”

“My brother asked it in a way that I could hardly refuse—they both reminded me so much that I should have the lion’s share—and I have too often been disappointed, Blanche, not to feel for poor Luke.”

“I hope you have not parted with the substance for the shadow, Horace,” said the cautious Blanche, in a low tone.

“By Jove! that thought has crossed me too,” said he.

“It must be by some strange and malignant chance—next to an impossibility,” replied she with a sigh of relief.

“If not I am indeed a ruined man, now and for ever!” answered Horace.

“ And so, allowance and birthright lost both of them—I need not ask you now how fares your love ?” said Blanche, again colouring very deeply.

“ We are both wretched now,” said Horace.

“ Why not speak to her, why not tell her this—all this ;” said Blanche with an effort, “ what is the use of telling it to me—explain in heaven’s name your conduct, or she will think you what you are not ; heartless like other men ?—why let her linger on in hope and fear—you know not what that is—tell her all that you have to say at once—” and Blanche rose and walked away.

“ I cannot,” replied Horace, “ it would not be an honourable thing to tell her that I love her when I cannot ask her to be my wife—”

“ That is a man’s notion of honour !” answered Blanche, “ I see it thus—far better and more honourable would it be to let her know you love her than to let her fear and

wonder till woman's pride, the greatest blessing women have, comes to the rescue."

"It might be kind, it might be pleasant—happier far for me; but—but I cannot do what the world deems a dishonourable thing."

"If that is your determination, Horace," said Blanche, "I have no more to say—my task of councillor is over, if I stay longer here I shall be—angry, Horace,—so—we shall meet at dinner—" and she left the room.

"Gone," said poor Horace, "and I had so much to say!"

Still what she said made an impression, it came like a temptation to do something wrong, again, and then again—as such he banished the thought whenever it presented itself, the world's code of honour shut out the better feeling, and made him deem that even Blanche was wrong upon that point.

And so he left poor Isabelle to weep and wonder, to believe he never cared for her, to torture herself with the most distressing

thought that can occur to a woman's mind, "that she has loved, and not been loved," rather than tell her the truth, rather than tell her the day must come when they might hope, although no present means existed of their marrying.

If through his life the upright Horace Leigh failed in a duty it was then, and if ever Blanche Trevor stepped to her own room with a conscience clear as day it was when she left her cousin ; she had performed *her* duty.

Blanche went to her little writing-table, worked herself into a splendid fit of indignation, and penned the following epistle to Mrs. Vernon, with whom she was a great and privileged favourite.

Lovers of truth and honesty as they both were they could scarcely fail to be great friends, despite the difference of their ages :

" MY DEAR MRS. VERNON,

" Having obtained leave,
(even if papa and mama should not feel equal

to the exertion themselves), I shall be most happy to accept your kind invitation to spend some little time with you before Luke's marriage. I shall be happy to accept the office of bridesmaid to my pretty cousin-in-prospect, and too happy to see you again. I suppose my uncle Leigh means to be very munificent to the young couple, as I have discovered he is going to deprive Horace of his allowance ; Luke as a married man will want more than ever !

“ I remain

“ Yours most affectionately

“ BLANCHE TREVOR.”

Having written this letter in a kind of triumphant manner, which appeared altogether uncalled for by the occasion, she dressed for their usual drive, and called upon the Walgraves with Mrs. Trevor. She found the girls in the highest spirits, and wondered much, though silently, at the beaming looks and happy laugh of Isabelle—she was not

aware that this was the day after that "horrid little man," had been so unexpectedly rejected by Lady Walgrave.

In the course of the next day the real and actual Mr. Green called in Cavendish Square ; as he was sitting in the drawing-room, Sir Josiah arrived from his country expedition, and was introduced to the handsome stranger as Mr. Green ; having arrived unexpectedly, and having entered the room without previously seeing his wife, Sir Josiah was naturally rather puzzled himself, and worried poor Lady Walgrave nearly into a state of insanity by his repeated and cordial enquiries after *his* Mr. Green, thinking it civil to praise him to a person whom he soon discovered was a relation.

"Lucky man !" (said Sir Josiah to the real person). "Lucky man our friend to have come into such an enormous fortune."

"I beg your pardon !" said the imlllionaire very must mystified at this, but not liking to say much.

"He is a great favourite of ours—often

gives us the pleasure of his company," said the unconscious baronet, altogether blind to his wife's vain endeavours to make him see he ought to hold his tongue.

"So I understand," replied *the* Green in rather a significant manner, which threw Lady Walgrave and Louisa into the most painful confusion. "I have not seen him since Mrs. Campbell's ball," he added, "I thought it possible I might have found him here."

Lady Walgrave was on the rack, but by a violent effort she succeeded in changing the subject, and the new Mr. Green took his departure, whilst she poor woman was so overcome by her disappointment, and her feelings, that to the very great astonishment of her husband and children, their visitor had scarcely closed the door when she burst into tears.

True to her character and her "*métier*" the manoeuvring mama was more overcome by the idea that if she had not been in such a hurry to secure the wrong one she might

have caught the right one ! than by all the annoying absurdity of the adventure.

“ My dear, my dear, what is all this about ?” asked the perplexed Sir Josiah, who was himself in the highest spirits at the great success of his last experiments.

“ You would go on about Mr. Green !” sobbed the poor wife.

“ And why upon earth should I not ?” enquired the astonished husband.

“ All I could do or look,” said the poor lady actually wringing her hands—“ Oh, if you did but know !” and she begun weeping piteously.

“ What can have happened ?—what is there to know ?—what has become of the poor little man ?” said Sir Josiah suspecting he did not know what.

“ I have—I have forbidden him the house,” sobbed out the lady.

“ Dear me, I thought he was in love with Loo—” said the astonished father.

“ He proposed,” stammered the lady.

“ How very much delighted you must

have been," sarcastically replied Sir Josiah, getting quite out of patience, "why what the —— then are you crying at?"

"He was—he was the *wrong one*," sobbed the lady; "that one—one here just now; *he* was *the* Mr. Green!" and wholly overcome she ended her sentence in a kind of subdued whine.

Put to him in this abrupt way, the first impulse of Sir Josiah was to burst into a fit of irrepressible laughter; the more he thought of all the pains taken to catch the "wrong one," the more he laughed, and in a few moments, the girls, who on seeing their mother so upset had been all but in tears themselves, could not resist, the infection of their father's hearty laugh, and to the unspeakable irritation of Lady Walgrave they laughed too!

Too much enraged to speak to them, she rose in the most dignified manner, and with her face half-buried in her laced-handkerchief she left the room; she felt herself a wretched mother and a most ill-used wife.

“ Ha, ha, ha, ha ! what is all this about ? ” enquired Sir Josiah of his daughters.

When they had explained it to the best of their power he burst into another laugh, so loud that Lady Walgrave heard it upstairs ; and vehemently declared—

“ It was the best joke he had ever heard in his life, and it served their mother quite right ! but he was very glad *he* had been out of it all.”

What drove poor Lady Walgrave to despair was this ; after all that had past she could not, must not, dared not, ask the *real one to dinner !*

Horace Leigh was sitting in his chambers ; with all he had to think of—and love matters are important to the young—he was still steadily at work, his papers were by him and books, learned in the law, were open before him ; he was not asleep, he was not writing letters or verses ; he was not drawing caricatures of the barristers, or judges from recollection ; he was not even answering invitations to balls though they were showered

upon him ; he was actually reading, he was actually attending to what he read ; and this is surely a thing to be remarked upon, enlarged upon and put down to his credit : the case is such a rare one !—opposite to him, on an uncomfortable chair, looking exceedingly weary though very handsome and interesting, doing nothing at all, sat Frederick Keane.

“ Oh, Horace, if you would but buy some comfortable seats ! I shall have to make you a present of an arm-chair I know I shall—it will come to that.”

“ I would not have one at a gift, old friend,” answered Horace, “ you may buy as many as you please, but they can’t come here.”

“ What an odd fellow you are, Horatio,” answered Fred with his eye-brows raised, and his usual expression of astonishment—“ why not ?”

“ Nothing would induce me to have an arm-chair here to make me idle,” energetically declared the young barrister, and he went on reading.

His friend sat on in silence, he had learnt to be quiet like a child when Horace was employed—it was the penalty he had to pay for being always with him, and he paid it willingly ; he felt so lost if Horace was long out of sight—so he looked placidly out of the window, and for the thousandth time amused himself with thinking of the very odd shapes of the chimney tops ;—then he got up and walked to the window, anxiously looking to see if it rained ; having convinced himself that it did, he returned to his place joggling the table in a very unpleasant manner, and causing Horace, who was then making notes from the book before him, to make a huge blot.

“ If you would but read, or do something,” expostulated he in a reproachful voice, “ instead of interrupting me !”

“ I could’nt work, work, work, as you do, Horace, upon my soul I could’nt,” apologetically answered poor Fred.

Horace found his lip curling involuntarily at this candid admission of the truth, but he

was quite irritated by all the little worrying shakes, and idle little noises that Fred had been indulging in for the last hour, and he exclaimed—

“I never felt inclined to horsewhip but one man in my life,” said Horace, “and that was a man and an officer, whom I saw at work with a needle!—but I do declare Fred I would rather see you at work with a worsted and a needle than see you, day by day, and month by month, do nothing—it is disgraceful idleness.”

“Now don’t—now don’t,” said Keane, “you’re using very strong language, Horace, only I know that you don’t mean it.”

“But I do—by Jove,” said Horace, getting really angry.

Fred made no answer but he took his hat and saying in a very penitential voice, “I won’t disturb you any more to-day,” he went out in the rain.

They saw rather too much of one another. Having given way to the family failing,

Horace, after a moment's pause was sorry he had been so harsh ; but it fretted him to see his pet friend wasting his time ; and not his own time alone, but that which Horace himself made use of to the best advantage. Blanche's words crept back into his memory whether he would or no. He and Frederick *were uncongenial*, the difference between their pursuits and characters was widening every day ; and yet they lived together—on that subject, Horace would not think, so he turned to his work again ; he was a very clever and very sensible youth Horace Leigh ! but before he gave his full attention to the book again ; he took out a pocket-book, opened it, took out a small white note, evidently an invitation, looked at it, and was so exceedingly foolish as to put it to his lips before he quietly replaced it—he had ascertained who wrote that little note, that she had watched out of the room with an equally foolish blush. It was Isabelle's first note to Horace.

One cannot put old heads upon young shoulders ; and it would be a very great pity if one could !

“ I wonder if Horace will come this morning,” observed Blanche to Mrs. Trevor a few days after this ; “ I have a decided presentiment that Mr. Spildin will be more eloquent than usual to-day, and if so, it will be quite a pity it should be lost on us ; not but that you enjoy the poor little man’s philosophy a little yourself, though you do sit there looking so grave ; I have observed that you find the open lid of your very large workbox, useful now and then at times,” said Blanche gaily, as she was preparing her easel and its accompaniments for the lesson she expected.

“ He is worth any money, that little man, and he thinks so himself,” continued she, laughing, as she rose to receive Horace, who quickly installed himself in his accustomed place, as the little queer knock announced the arrival of the artist.

"Pray Mr. Spildin do you teach figures, as well as landscape?" enquired his pupil.

"Oh yes I take off heads I do," replied the artist with a reverential bow, "a little time ago mum, and I would have offered to take *your* head mum, at half price, I would, as you're my best pupil: but I've give it up."

These last words were spoken in a tone of the deepest despondency.

"Oh you took likenesses—I was not aware of that," said Blanche, "I meant could you teach me to copy a figure."

"I teach everything!" said the artist in a tone of conscious ability, "anythink *you* please."

"What made you give up taking likenesses?" enquired Blanche.

"Feelings," said Mr. Spildin solemnly.

"It must have been more advantageous," suggested the pupil.

"You *may* say that," energetically observed the artist, "a guinea a head!—just fancy that, I got it, and yet it didn't pay."

I'll mix that colour mum, your manner is too dry—you're not smooth and oily enough in *your* manner mum—that's what people like—imitate me!"

There was a rustling in the distance at this particular moment, and Mrs. Trevor was seized with a slight cough.

"As I was saying mum," continued the artist, "what prevented my going on taking off heads was—*my feelings*, they was too tender that they was."

"The sentiment does you honour sir," observed Horace, with exemplary gravity, "but I do not see exactly how?"

"Why you see sir, the end and aim of life is to give satisfaction, ain't it? to one-self first, and then to everybody else. That is an opinion sir, I never heard contradicted, yet, I never saw the man that could; well sir, I did *not* give satisfaction. Nobody thought I made 'em as good looking as they was! It's human nature that—and I would rather draw *that* nature sir, which is *not*

human ; for *that* don't grumble ! no it don't ;
—never."

He went on mixing the colours for Blanche in silence, he felt that no one could contradict him there !

" And is it possible the people were not pleased ?" said Horace, in a tone which showed him thoroughly disgusted with the unknown people.

" I'll tell you how it was," answered Mr. Spildin ; " it was the friends—they did it ; one comes in, and says, says he, ' that eye is very like, but t'other one wont do at all.' ' The eyes is very tolerably well,' will say another ; ' but that nose ! no friend of Snigg's wouldn't say that nose was his.' Then come another : ' La, Mr. Spildin, now you've been and altered Sniggs's eye—you spoilt it quite—'taint a bit like—and 'twas so very good.' ' Don't you think, would say one, if you cut off a bit of Sniggs's cheek he'd look the better for it ?' I cut it off—and then I couldn't put it on again—not right, at least ! Then Mrs. Spildin, *she*

was an objection! she didn't like seeing so many pictures of such pretty girls about—she didn't. She was a pretty girl herself—and she know what it is. 'Then you see, sir, to me, with my great principle, which I must always stick to of satisfaction, to myself; *this* wasn't *that*. The friends, they lacerated my feelings with their observations, all contrary one to the other, sir, invariable! The very people, sir, whose heads I took, those very people flung them in my face at times, and wouldn't take 'em home; they wouldn't hang them sir; they said they wasn't like. You wouldn't have had me go on after that! At times they wouldn't pay me; and when they did, a guinea! no! *two* guineas wouldn't pay one's feelings! One man a-coming and declaring he wouldn't hang his wife—she warn't worth hanging; that was a warnin, sir—I give it up. A guinea is a guinea—but I'd rather have half a crown, and not be lacerated every hour of the day by everybody that comes in!"

“ I quite agree with you,” said Horace.

“ And so I took to landscape, sir. Trees have no eyes that *must* look the same way, which aint so easy. Trees have *no friends* to come a findin fault!”

“ But people do sometimes remember places,” modestly suggested Horace.

“ They do sir—I know that ; and so I never paint a *real* place. I take a mounting out of one place, and a village from another, and a tree out of my head ; and as there aint such a place in the world, it stops their mouths, it do. They can’t say it aint like.”

“ Certainly not,” said Blanche, flourishing her brush with very unnecessary energy.

“ Have you been to the exhibition ?” enquired Horace, after a pause, which was really a painful one to him and his cousin.

“ No, sir—I never go ; it aint no use. I paint as well as they do ; only they’ve got a name, *they* have !”

“ Which they don’t deserve ?” asked Horace.

“Certainly not, sir,” said the artist, drawing himself up, and looking as proud and dignified—as he could. “This, sir, this, mum, which you’re a going, as you always do, to make an exact copy of! this is what *I* call a picture; it’s nature all over, though it *is* out of my head. The sky is blue, and the clouds is grey, and the mounting is blue, and trees is green, all as they ought to be—nature is always as she ought to be, though *human* nature aint; I like to make a great distinction ’tween the two—it’s my philosophy. Trees are better nor we are—they never do no harm; except to attract the lightning, when your’e a standing under ’em—and they don’t do that a-purpose; their worst of enemies can’t say that—and praps our enemies could, of us—or worse. I don’t of course mean *you*, mum, but only human creatures in general—oh, where was I!”—he had rather lost the thread of his discourse, and had got slightly entangled in his philosophy—but

that was a way he had!—"Oh! I was saying that my sky was blue, and my grass was green—as in duty bound it ought to be if there havn't been a drought—and yet *I* havn't got a name; but now go to the exhibition, and look just at a pictur of that man Pallet, *with* the name—are *his* trees green! I've seen a pictur of his, mum, I have; and when I went back to my home and Mrs. Spildin asked me about the pictures, mum; I said, with great severity—'poach me an egg; I am the master in my house, I am.' She poached the egg. I took a canvass, mum—I said to 'Tom, 'bring me the mustard pot—my boys do as I bid 'em, that they do; he brought the mustard pot. I said to my other boy, 'bring me the ink. I took the canvass, mum—I took the egg, I spilt it on the canvass, mum; I spilt the mustard on the egg, just streaky, like; I took the ink, I spilt it in a blot right in the middle of the egg, and drawed the ink all down; and then I told my wife, 'there, wife, there is the best picture in the exhi-

bition ; that's Pallet's picture ; and *he's got a name*. He called it " morning," that he did—I call it a poached egg and ink, I do. I'll tell you what I heard—that Pallet sent a pictur to the exhibition, and when he came to see it at the private view, what do you think ?—they'd hung it topsy turvy. Pallet *was* furious, oh, he was ; but the committee said they couldn't help it—he must write upon his pictures which was the top—*they* couldn't tell—*nobody couldn't tell !*"

CHAPTER IX.

A FEW days after Blanche's letter Mrs. Vernon wrote—

“ My dear Boy,

“ Hearing that your dear
“ Father, with his usual sense of justice, is
“ about to deprive you, of your allowance,
“ and having no idea of his placing you in
“ embarrassments, in which you would never
“ entangle yourself, I have ordered my man

“ of business, to add another two hundred a
“ year, to the sum he has already been
“ ordered to pay quarterly, to your account;
“ and I hope you will write to your father
“ and tell him, you are willing and able,
“ Horace, to resign *his* allowance at once.
“ I shall hope, of course, to see you as one
“ of the family party, for Luke’s wedding;
“ and *we* will be merry, if Luke is not wise.
“ I have an idea that his extreme felicity
“ will not last long. Old people like me,
“ Horace, learn to see things, in such a
“ prosaic and matter of fact, light; but I
“ like young people to be happy *whilst they*
“ *can*. You will like your new sister,
“ Horace, she is so fascinating, that she
“ dazzles and blinds even me, although I
“ flatter myself that, with my spectacles on,
“ I really can see a little into people—but
“ I have my doubts, and yet she has such a
“ light heart, that even Luke will not be
“ able to break it, I rather suspect he will
“ not even bend it.

“ I have such perfect confidence in you,

“ my dearest nephew, that my pen follows
“ my thoughts—very imprudent and silly at
“ my time of life—but I can trust you. I
“ mean to be very gay indeed, my house
“ will be full, and you must be master of
“ the revels. Luke, as a lover, is a curious
“ sight, it amuses me.

“ I shall wish you to choose me a set of
“ gem or rather pearls, for the bride elect,
“ but look about you, and let me know the
“ price. I must be just, before I can be
“ generous. There certainly is more in one
“ of those old sayings, Horace, than in all
“ we moderns say, or write, in a whole life-
“ time—our wisdom is diluted—theirs is
“ pure spirit. So my dear boy, good-bye
“ until we meet.

“ Your most affectionate Aunt,

“ OLYMPIA VERNON.

She is a blessed woman that old aunt of mine, thought Horace, but this is mischie-

vous indeed—"it makes it more impossible than ever," and repeating these words unconsciously aloud—the countenance of the young man assumed an expression that was very like despair.

"What is the matter with you?" enquired Frederick Keane, lifting up his large eyes, with wonder; "any bad news, Horatio, in your letter—letters are always bores—one has to answer them—there's nothing wrong I hope."

"Nothing," said Horace, with an absent look; and his unobservant friend was satisfied. "I shall just go out, and make some calls."

"I know where you're going," said Frederick Keane, trying to look wise, and really looking pert.

Horace Leigh did not answer, he was sitting and looking at the letter.

"You won't be so absent when you're in Grosvenor-square," said Keane triumphantly, being under the delusion that he was right in his conjectures. "I am not blind, I know

all about it !” and he laughed a little quiet laugh.

“Grosvenor-square ?—what do you mean ?—what do you know ?” said Horace, in rather an impatient way.

“You can’t deceive me,” said Fred, looking at Horace with his large, child-like eyes, full of meaning ; “I know you are going to Grosvenor-square *as usual* ; and I expect soon to congratulate. I say old fellow, you might tell *me* before the world in general.”

“Fred,” replied Horace ; “upon my word there is nothing to tell.”

“Nothing at present—not just yet, I dare say,” said Keane ; “but you will never persuade me, that you would day, after day, leave, those dearly beloved books of yours—books that you wouldn’t leave to save my life—unless you left them for something, or somebody, who was dearly beloved too !—” and Frederick stopped, persuaded in his own mind, that he had made out an excellent case, in a very clever manner.

When a person who has not many ideas

in general, can find one, which they consider good, they hold to it, as a drowning man to a straw ; it seems they are aware it may be long before they find another.

“ My dear Fred,” said Horace gravely “ if you imagine I am in love with Blanche, or she with me, you are uncommonly mistaken—we are relations—pray remember that ;—and have a hundred family matters to talk over.”

“ Family humbugs.” said Keane.

And Horace, worried as he was, could not help laughing at Keane’s assumption of wisdom and knowledge, when he was so far, so very far from the truth.

This confirmed Fred in his opinion, and throwing himself back in his chair he triumphantly declared—

“ I knew I was right !”

“ Never were more wrong ; (and that is saying a good deal,)” added Horace in his own mind.

“ You can’t persuade *me* !” said Fred, “ people in love are just like ostriches, they

hide their heads in some corner or other, and then fancy no one can see them, Horatio; it won't do, indeed it won't."

"If you like to deceive yourself you must," said Horace, "but I am not deceiving you—Blanche Trevor is to me a most dear sister."

"Cousins are dangerous things! it's very well to call them sisters; very convenient indeed," said Keane, in what he intended for a very sarcastic tone.

"Think what you will, you put one out of patience," said Horace Leigh angrily.

"I say—do you know you're not half such a good temper as you used to be, no not a quarter; but I don't wonder at you, if Miss Trevor wasn't so horridly clever I should be in love with her myself."

Horace had left the room before he came to the conclusion of his speech, so he went on thinking in his disjointed way—

"Dear me, yes! what nonsense! that dear, old fellow, Horace, trying to humbug me—why he must see that it won't do—I've

shown him that—yes! very well done too—had him there, he hadn't a word to say,—and now if any one had accused *me* of caring for Miss Trevor I should have denied it that I should—like anything, and yet—upon my word now I really think at one time, only that no one knows it—I did care for her—yes! I did: only I soon saw that it was no use! no chance with Leigh—oh, none at all, with her at least—there they were always together, and talking business! as he says: fancy *me* talking business to a young lady! Horace is a clever fellow too in general; but I shouldn't be such a fool as that!—Well, yes! it certainly is a pity Miss Trevor is so clever as she is—it really isn't natural in a woman, so elegant and gentle as she is, so kind too—what a pity that she is so clever—it frightens one so.”

If young Frederick's thoughts had found themselves words, they would have been precisely these.

He sat vacantly looking at the table where his friend had left him seated—he never had

anything to do, when a new novel appeared he was always one of the first to read and forget it ; this he did with such expedition that he often read a book over for the second time without finding it out, till he came to some striking incident of which he could not help retaining some faint recollection ; this quality of forgetfulness is highly useful to a novel reader, it often provides them with more amusement than would fall to the lot of one with a better memory, so everything in this world has its use and its bright side ! Good or bad every novel was the same to him, provided only that it was not *too* good, for then he voted it a bore ; and so he spent his life, the very summer of his days, in a kind of idle dreaminess. Horace, at times, would try, even with too rude a hand, to wake him up, but it was no use—the excitement of college over, Frederick Keane felt he need not exert himself, even for the every day affairs of life ; for in their joint home Horace managed everything, so he led a kind of butterfly existence, and was in

point of mind and mental energy deteriorating fast, though manner and appearance were most prepossessing still; he was meant to be ornamental in this world of ours—that was his part in life.

He was quite right in one thing, Horace Leigh was going to the Trevors' with Mrs. Vernon's letter.

He found his cousin in the drawing-room alone.

"Blanche, dear Blanche, just read that letter," said he giving it into her hands.

When she had finished it she looked up with a smile of pleasure and congratulation on her face, but he stopped her before she had time to speak.

"Do not deny it—this is your doing, Blanche, no one but you could have given Aunt Vernon such early information."

"I own I did it," replied Blanche, "but in the most careful manner, she could not for a moment think you were an accomplice—one noble nature judges *another* better!"

She saw a cloud upon Horace's face, and fancied that he feared his aunt should think he knew of her writing: the suspicion was not like her usual train of thought, but she could think of no other cause for his grave countenance.

"I was not afraid of your having managed badly!" said Horace with a sad smile, "you are not in the habit of being stupid, sister Blanche, nor am I afraid of good aunt Vernon's fancying anything, except that I am far better than I am, but I am sorry, bitterly sorry."

Blanche looked up in astonishment.

"Sorry! it makes you independent; for a gift from *her*, dear, generous woman, argues no dependence in the acceptance of it; is it not a relief to have the means of comfort at her hands—rather than at *theirs*?" and she uttered the last word in a tone of some disgust.

"My own, dear Blanche, you did it wisely, kindly; for the best; but if I had told you my thoughts, as I was just about to do a

dozen times, but something always interrupted us ; you never would have written, Blanche : you have destroyed my last faint hope of happiness."

" I ?" said Blanche turning pale.

" I had a feeling in which you would have sympathised, had I but told you !" he paused. " Had I but told you Blanche, *in time*."

" Do not keep me in suspense, go on," said she in a hurried manner.

But he paused as it were to collect his thoughts before he spoke, and the silence was very painful to her excited feelings.

" What harm can I have done ?" said she at last, quite in despair.

" I must begin, dear Blanche, I often made you angry by my hesitation ; you have left me in anger, when I was about to tell you the real cause of my delay, would that I had ! You will understand how bitterly painful it would be to ask, or seem even to ask another favour—more especially if it be money from one who has already showered benefits upon you. I dared not own to good aunt Vernon

that I loved, or she would at once have offered to do more ; you see by *this* she would," and he touched the letter. "Not even to make Isabelle my wife, could I directly or indirectly, Blanche—*ask more from Mrs. Vernon* ; you will see this, you will feel with me Blanche, you will feel for me, this was the cause which prevented my speaking to Isabelle Walgrave, this was the barrier which I could not overstep even to secure my own happiness for life."

"I see, I understand, *I* could not have done it either ;" said Blanche Trevor, "I feel for you, I that have blamed you, Horace ; you were right."

"But listen, I had a hope, almost a certain hope, mean it might be, and selfish, but those who love are selfish."

"*Are* they," said she in a very strange, low voice.

"I had a hope that when aunt Vernon heard, as she might hear by chance, by mere report, or by my father ; that I loved, but could not marry, I had a hope," and his voice

trembled more and more, "that then, aunt Vernon would—would, help me to be happy, Blanche---that hope, *you*, dearest, have destroyed."

He said this in a quiet manner, but his face was full of bitter grief.

"This letter makes it more impossible than ever ; before I could not *ask*, but now that she has heaped favour on favour, I could not *receive* more money at her hands ; you must feel this, and yet all that I have is not enough."

"And all this," said Blanche, pausing at almost every word, "all this, is my doing, when I thought, I hoped," and slowly the large tears filled her eyes, and fell one by one unnoticed.

"My last hope is gone," said Horace calmly, "I cannot hope to marry now for years, and by that time, oh, who can tell?" and he walked up and down slowly and sadly.

"How can I ever hope you will forgive

me!" said poor Blanche deeply grieved at the consequences of her successful hint to Mrs. Vernon.

"I can have nothing to forgive, dear girl," said Horace, "my telling you all this is the best proof of my affection and my confidence—if I had but told you---"

"I might have known you would have had that feeling, it is so like you," said his cousin, "but---but, it did not strike me, and indeed ---indeed---I thought that I was serving you."

"I know you did, I know it all, but nevertheless you see, it was an injury, but---I can never have anything to forgive in *you*."

"You may pardon this most unconscious fault;" said Blanche, brushing away the tears, "but I can never forgive myself."

"Here is a pretty mess," said Sir Josiah, entering his drawing-room that day with two letters in his hand—"I thought *I* was out of it, but here I am appealed to—I can't help it! your mother has got herself and you into the mess, and she must get you out of it

again. Look here—he wants an interview ; and here’s a letter.”

Louisa looked so terrified at this harangue, and took the letter with such evident disgust, that her father patted her head, and bursting out laughing again at this revival of the business, declared—

“ There—never mind ; you shall not have him, if you don’t like him ; I should wonder if you did ! Your mother—ha ! ha ! ha !—persuaded me you thought him—ha ! ha ! ha !—” he could not keep his gravity, do what he would.

The unlucky Louisa, who fondly hoped she had heard and seen the last of that “ horrid little Mr. Green,” was thunder-struck at finding a letter to herself, with that most annoying name appended to it.

“ My dear Miss Walgrave,

“ The events of the last few days have been so rapid and incomprehensible to me, my short-lived happiness was so soon suc-

ceeded by the bitterest disappointment of my life, in the unqualified rejection which I received from the lips of Lady Walgrave, on the very day on which she had in the most flattering manner allowed me to believe myself accepted by you ; all this was so sudden and unexpected that I was bewildered ; and in your father's absence, I felt I had a friend the less in my distress !

“ The more I think over this affair— which, were it to end now, would make the misery of my life ; (for, believe me, no woman was ever more deeply and dearly loved by man than you are, my adored Louisa, by me !—the more I am convinced that there is some mistake fatal to me !) I have appealed to your father to allow me an interview with him ; and I now entreat you to allow me one with you ; if I am to be rejected, it must be by your own lips. Lady Walgrave I dare not face again, till this mistake has been cleared up ; but it is on you, beloved Louisa, on your tender

heart, on your gentle affection, that I rely!
surely you will not reject

“Your devoted and deeply attached,
“OBADIAH GREEN.”

Poor Louisa had not the least idea whether she felt most inclined to laugh or to cry; her great idea was—“Some one must have written it for him;” as she gave it to her father to read, who passed it on to Isabelle.

Louisa felt no inclination to put it up in pocket-books, or put it up in drawers, tied up with ribband; she did not care the least who read it!

Sir Josiah was altogether useless upon this puzzling matter; he could not and would not look upon it in any light but as a good joke, although it was now in truth becoming serious.

The three could devise nothing but an appeal to Lady Walgrave.

To her this unexpected resurrection of *the* Green was bitterly annoying; and her

powers of action failed her altogether upon this trying occasion.

“One thing I’m quite determined on,” said Sir Josiah—“I will have nothing at all to do with it. I can understand most things, but this is beyond me altogether; you have begun, and you must finish it, my dear!” and with a broad smile, and a most provoking look, he waited to hear what she would arrange.

“Interviews!” shudderingly observed she—“we must have no interviews—Louisa must write.”

“Thank you, mama; oh, dear mama, that is delightful,” said the poor girl, clasping her hands in an ecstasy of relief at the idea that she need *not* see her little lover.

“And *you* must write, my dear.”

“Yes, my love—what?” replied Sir Josiah, with the most provoking assumption of meekness and submission.

That was the puzzle—what!

“There is but one safe course,” said Lady Walgrave, recovering herself in some

degree ; “ the one I took at first ; Louisa must repeat what I asserted, that upon consideration—”

“ Of his being poor,” interrupted Sir Josiah, with exemplary gravity.

“ Consideration,” said Lady Walgrave, making a full stop at the word, and looking pins and needles at her provoking husband, who was really behaving more like a naughty boy than a clever, elderly gentleman. “ She does not feel herself sufficiently attached to take so important a step—and so on. I can write, and you can copy, my dear,” concluded Lady Walgrave, addressing Louisa.

“ And will you write mine—for that will be the most difficult of the two ?” said Sir Josiah, with his mock humility coming on again.

Lady Walgrave did not condescend to answer, but she gravely requested—

“ That she might see it, lest, as he did not quite understand the matter, he should make a mistake.”

“ I shall know which Green I am to write to,” said Sir Josiah, laughing out ; “ *I* do not make mistakes—taking one person for another.”

And so the letters were dispatched ; and they sat down again to their occupations, hoping for peace and quiet.

But Mr. Green had not done with them yet.

The day following this did not go by without a letter from the distracted, but persevering lover.

“ MY DEAR SIR JOSIAH,

“ Deeply attached as I have become to your beautiful and fascinating daughter, I should have probably acquiesced in *her* determination to reject me, had not certain rumours led me to hope that the mistake between myself and my cousin may have been the cause of my being accepted, and then renounced.

“My cousin is indeed the hero of the newspapers, but we are a wealthy family—my own patrimony, for I am an orphan, amounts to three-thousand a-year, and my uncle in leaving my cousin his heir, left to me also eighty-thousand pounds in ready money. If therefore Lady Walgrave’s treatment of me was based on the supposition, that I could not support her daughter as such a fair creature ought to be supported—I trust, Sir Josiah, that you will see that on those grounds I have nothing to fear—I will hope that I have not been led on to the height of happiness only to be dashed down from it at a blow. I will still hope that your lovely daughter was only actuated by the prudent remonstrances of Lady Walgrave, and that I may still hope to call her mine for life.

“Yours truly

“OBADIAH GREEN.”

The communication of this letter com-

pleted the measure of Lady Walgrave's self-condemnation and despair.

Here was a match !

And she had thrown it away—poor Louisa's horror lest now that he was after all so rich, she might be asked to have him ! was an unfounded terror. Not even Lady Walgrave could do that, and that made her more unhappy than ever ; it was her doing from first to last, and now she really had not the courage to make her daughter *own* how much *her* affections depended on *his* money !

" Lost, lost, *such a match !*" exclaimed she aloud.

" And *such a man !*" gravely added her husband.

" Louisa you must write—no, I mean Sir Josiah, and repeat all about her affections," said Lady Walgrave uttering this absurd sentence with a grave countenance of blank despair. " I have indeed managed badly for I have lost them both."

“ My love,” said Sir Josiah, “ your silly plots and plans are always ending in some scrape—why can’t you give them up ?”

He never thought of giving up his own.

CHAPTER X.

A LARGE party was assembled at High Elms, to celebrate the approaching wedding of Luke Leigh and his fair intended. The grounds were in great beauty, and it was as pleasant a life, as well could be, to spend the heat of the day, under the deep and tranquil shade of the old Elms, and to ride and walk, through the long summer day, when it was cooler.

To leave hot, dusty, smoky London, with its noise and glare, for the deep quiet of one

of our country homes, is a calming and delicious thing; truly refreshing, both to body and mind, and yet the sudden absence of excitement, the perfect silence generally makes one drowsy. This is not a romantic idea, but it is true.

It was a very hot afternoon, about ten days before the time appointed for the wedding, and Emily was spending the day at Mrs. Vernon's.

There was one favorite spot in the grounds to which the whole party had resorted, it was one of those days on which it is much too hot to do anything, few and far between in our cold and wintry summers, when such days *do* come they are proportionably prized.

There was a slight slope in the grass under the grand old trees which spread their verdant boughs far and wide, a long avenue opened to the right its vista of green and shade—there is something fascinating to the imagination in an avenue with its long perspective leading off, perhaps you know

not where. There is a something left to fancy ; and it seems almost like a glimpse into the far off future, the knowledge of which is so wisely and mercifully withheld from us.

An opening through the trees nearer at hand gave a view of the country with the blue hills beyond ; and altogether it was a spot favoured by nature : the squirrels, undismayed by the unwonted sound of many voices, were jumping as merrily as ever from bough to bough, and through the trees ever and anon slowly passed the deer, stopping with their beautiful heads raised in wonder to look at the party, and then bounding away in fear.

The buzz of the insects was the only sound the ear could catch in any temporary silence of the merry group, who were enjoying the shade—Mrs. Vernon with her brother, and Mrs. Leigh and the Trevors had seats which had been placed under the favourite elms, but Horace and Blanche, Luke and his pretty Emily were lounging comfortably

on the soft and mossy grass, whilst Frederick Keane's handsome face in a glow of pleasure was one of the happiest of the party.

"If there were many such days as this, one would begin to understand the "*Dolce far niente*," observed Horace to Blanche, who with her bonnet off, was enjoying the slight breeze which now and then moderated the extreme heat.

"I wish you wouldn't speak French," said Fred in a reproachful tone, displaying that extraordinary ignorance of modern languages which even clever, and well educated gentlemen are by no means ashamed of. Englishmen standing quite alone in that peculiarity.

Horace exchanged a look with Blanche who looked away, and Emily flinging back her dancing curls just like a child, fairly laughed aloud.

"What are you laughing at, sweetest?" said Luke, bending a look of admiration upon her sparkling eyes.

“Mr. Keane doesn’t know French from Italian !” said she.

“Neither do I,” said Luke, and his brow grew slightly dark, “but I hope you will not laugh at me !”

“Oh yes I shall—we shall be getting into famous scrapes abroad,” replied his pretty fiancée laughing still ; “if I had known that, I wouldn’t have agreed to—go abroad, at all, or anything of that sort ; perhaps it is still time Luke to—break it off,” she whispered.

Luke looked angrily at her, but she was watching an adventurous squirrel, and screamed out, “good gracious, what a jump !” just as he was going to say something in his usual, or rather his old manner ; for love had softened him more than could well have been believed.

So he had time to recover himself, before she looked at him again, and then he was all smiles ; he could not yet look at that sunny face, and feel ill-tempered ; so he bent down and whispered,

“If you wont break our engagement off, we will travel in great state, we’ll have a courier.”

“Famous, he can hear for us ; see for us ; understand for us !” said Emily looking up archly at him. “Will you engage him, Luke, to see for us ; ’twill save us so much trouble, and *we* shall be, I know it—just as wise !”

“You shall do what you please,” said Luke enthusiastically.

“And you must do so too,” said Emily, holding up her taper finger, at selfish, rough Luke Leigh, as if he had been a playful child.

“I will, I promise,” answered Luke, thinking he never saw her look so lovely.

Emily turned her sunny face full upon him and with a smile of no common fascination, said “Good Boy.”

What silly little—very little nothings amuse great men and women when they are in love.

Luke was enchanted.

Blanche Trevor had just caught the angry

look which Emily had lost by watching the lively squirrel, and she whispered to Frederick.

“ See now what mischief you have done.”

“ I ?” said the innocent man.

“ By not understanding Italian you have nearly made that pair, so happy till you spoke, you have nearly made them quarrel, pray did you see that look ?”

“ I did Miss Trevor ; nothing particularly new in it,” said Fred, wisely nodding his head.

“ Quite new to her ; and you the cause of it.”

“ I’m always getting into scrapes,” said Fred in a piteous tone, “ and I never understand how, I’m sure I don’t know what I’ve done.”

“ Oh, never mind,” said Horace, “ Blanche do not tease poor Fred.”

“ That’s right Horatio ;” said Keane, brightening up—“ you are so dreadfully clever you two, I never know what I’m about.”

“ You very easily believe yourself to be wrong, Mr. Keane,” said Blanche, “ you really said and did nothing—quite as usual,” added she.

“ Oh didn’t I—then I’m all right, (that’s folly,) said he, finishing the last two words quite to himself, they being his favorite expression.

“ Much ado about nothing,” said Horace, rather impatiently, “ this heat makes one quite silly.”

“ *I* don’t find it does,” said Keane in the most unconscious manner.

“ Don’t you,” said Horace, and Blanche looked away.

“ How you can make a friend of such a foolish creature,” said Blanche to Horace that evening, “ is wonderful to me—depend upon it you will have reason to repent it some of these days.”

“ Never !” said Horace, “ he has such a heart.”

“ The heart is a blind guide to him, for

he sees nothing," answered she, "a clever man like you!—"

"I have observed," interrupted Horace, "that two clever people like, but never do love one another, Blanche."

"I *know* it," replied she in a strange voice, and she moved on.

Frederick Keane was not in a good-humour (for him) that evening; the little scene when they were sitting in the shade so quietly, grated upon his mind, although he scarcely knew why it did so; he had an undefined, and yet a perpetually recurring idea that he had been laughed at, there were so many little words, and tones so perfectly incomprehensible to him, that he fancied, actually began to discover, that they were quizzing him, and he felt humiliated.

"Horatio alone was bad enough, but he *and* Miss Trevor were *too* much!"

Emily was as blithe as a bird, she went about the house singing, she was delighted to go abroad, delighted with Luke, and delighted with her new dresses.

“ My goodness, Charlotte !” said she as they were examining a new arrival from the milliner’s. “ It is quite worth while to be married, isn’t it now, to have such a lovely dress as this ? I always was as happy as a queen, but I have been more so since I was engaged, it is so very amusing to have some one running about after you, *just like Carlo, between ourselves,*” and she patted her pet spaniel, and laughed merrily—“ Yes, just like you, old dog !” she continued, finishing her speech to Carlo who sat vehemently wagging his feathery tail, “ running and jumping about at a word, and doing everything I tell him ;—just like you it is !—and being quite unhappy if I do but hold up my finger so !” and the dog, accustomed to be scolded in that way, looked as guilty, and foolish as a black and tan spaniel could—till she burst out into her merry, childish laugh, making her good and sober sister Charlotte look grave and shake her head at her unthinking sister.

“ Yes, I have been a happy creature all

my life, and if I am to go on being happier, and happier as Luke declares I shall—I don't know what I shall come to!"

And delighted at this fair vision of the future, Emily suddenly seized Carlo's pretty front paws, and began dancing about the room in so ridiculous a *pas de deux*, that Charlotte herself laughed till the tears stood in her eyes at the piteous but resigned face of the unlucky dog ; who dancing till Emily released him, was so overcome with fatigue that he curled himself up upon one of the new dresses and went off into a deep sleep of exhaustion at which Emily was too much amused to disturb him.

"Emily, Emily!" said her sister, "how are you ever to get through the duties of life if you are so giddy?"

"That is exactly what I don't know," said Emily, "but begone dull care, is the motto for me," and in a sweet, rich voice she began to sing the old familiar ditty, waking up Carlo in a fright.

Just then her maid knocked at the door

with a very smiling face, and announced a box from London. One of the servants opened it outside and brought it into the room where they were sitting; it was the old school-room.

“Here, bring it in, Thomas,” she exclaimed, “this doesn’t look much like a school-room now—the piano, horrid old thing, at which I had to sit for hours is all over new bonnets!—a beautiful pink silk gown is spread out upon the terrestrial globe making the world all *couleur de rose*! really a good idea that, for it is so to me.—A blue satin covers the celestial globe, neat and appropriate,” continued Emily, “a new edition, Charlotte, of the use of the globes—dear me, what a pity Luke isn’t here to hear all my wit—it is not often I am either witty, or wise, is it?—New gowns, collars, and gloves where there used to be nothing but books and copy-books—what a blessing it is to be out of the school-room!—Not that I mind being in it *as it*

is," said the *fiancée* laughing, and whirling round upon one foot.

Charlotte was shaking her head at her incorrigible absurdities, but when she caught her eyes, she pointed to the box, which had by this time been unpacked, and there fully displayed was a sight which silenced Emily, merry as her mood had been.

It was her wedding-dress ; and made the fact that she was going from her home and going to another—very real and very near.

She sat down quietly and looked at it in silence, and Charlotte would not interrupt the train of her thoughts ; but Emily's happy face was not made to express care or anxiety even for a moment, and tossing back her bright curls which the downcast position of her pretty head had brought too much over her blushing face, she shook, as it were, all serious thought away.

"I shall be happier than I have been, so why should I feel sad. I shall have nothing to do with housekeeping and keys ; I do not

believe Charlotte," continued she, that I could lock up anything if I were to try!"

"You silly child," said Charlotte.

"I don't believe that Luke would care for me one half so much as he does if I were *not* so silly," said Emily laughing, "it is a pleasant thing for him to feel immeasurably my superior—not that I think he is—between ourselves, grave sister mine."

"Don't let him see that you think that," said Charlotte in some alarm, for she had looked into Luke's character with her calm, steady eyes, and well-hidden as it was just now, she had read more than she liked; when it was too late.

"Don't be afraid, I turn him round my finger," laughingly asserted Emily, "he is a nice, dear, darling, pet of a slave; for life!—and what is more, Miss Charlotte, don't be shocked and scold, but I shall flirt just every bit as much as I shall please—he does not know what it is to be jealous."

"Emily, you were silly; now you are wrong, unprincipled."

“Not in the least,” said Emily, “not I; what does it matter if I love him. Surely I may amuse myself—I amuse him enough, why should I not have my turn?”

“Hush, hush, dear sister, do not say such things even to me,” said Charlotte looking pained and sorrowful.

Emily flew to her, put her arms round her and kissed her forehead.

“There, there,” she said, just as she would have spoken to a child, “I didn’t mean to vex it, I only meant to teaze—I was in fun; for gay and giddy as I am, I love deeply and dearly—you and Luke.”

Charlotte kissed her tenderly, and stroked her fair young head; the fascination of Emily’s manner was perfectly irresistible.

Another knock at the door interrupted the sisters, and the smiling maid-servant brought in a small, mysterious-looking box in one hand, and in the other was a smaller parcel.

The first was opened, and in its case of crimson velvet lay a set of pearls—it was

Mrs. Vernon's present to her new niece. With all the anxiety of a child Emily eagerly unfastened the parcel, it contained a very lovely ruby and diamond broach.

"From that dear Horace I declare ; how very kind and generous ; if I did not already think myself a fortunate creature, I should consider it a happiness to have such a dear brother, as we have never had one, Charlotte."

"He will indeed be a brother to you, and a guide should you require one," answered Charlotte, thinking sadly how much more fortunate Emily would be in her new brother than in her husband.

"I am dreadfully afraid of him—he watches so, and yet he can't help smiling at my nonsense ; dear, good, awfully steady Horace, I have a presentiment he will one day do me a great service, Charlotte, and my presentiments always come right, or wrong—invariably !"

And the gay *fiancée* having put on the pearls and fastened on the broach, ran

wildly down the stairs to show them to her father. Looking into the drawing-room to see in the tall glass what their effect might be, she encountered Luke, who having just ridden over detained his pretty lady-love.

“It is quite worth while to be married, Luke,” she exclaimed; “one has such presents !”

Luke had brought his ; Blanche had commissioned him to present her little gifts, and when Charlotte, with unpardonable stupidity, entered the room in which, in justice to her it must be said, she had no idea of finding Luke ; she discovered Emily all smiles and blushes, laughing more merrily than usual ; Luke had her hand which she was endeavouring to withdraw, and he was trying on her wedding-ring.

All these eras of a woman's life were to that young and thoughtless girl, just out of the school-room, so much amusement, and she greeted Charlotte with a face of infinite glee, declaring—

“ That she felt like a princess in the Arabian Nights Tales ; all over jewels.”

* * * * *

“ Well, Horace,” said Mrs. Vernon ;
“ what say you to your sister.”

“ The most wild and fascinating child.”
replied the nephew.

“ Do you think she cares for Luke,” enquired the aunt.

“ No ! but she never will care for any one.”

“ You have judged her rightly ; luckily for her, her heart is so light, it cannot be touched—or broken.”

“ You infer much,” replied Horace.

“ I mean much,” answered the old lady ; “ the less Luke’s wife is capable of feeling, the better ; had she had one shadow more of it, I would have warned her ; it is a melancholy thing to see that young creature, dancing on towards her fate, Horace ; it makes me sad, it is upon my conscience

but the warning would have been in vain, how can I expect her to believe him to be what he is ; was ever change so great !”

“ I must watch over her,” said Horace, in a tone of deep feeling ; “ I love her as something too bright ever to be dimmed by sorrow, but as you say—Luke’s wife !”

“ This mood can’t last,” said Mrs. Vernon ; “ but Emily has such a temper, I will hope for the best, though when one has reached my age one seldom sees, reason to hope.”

“ Sad doctrine, aunt.”

“ But true,” said Mrs. Vernon.

“ I have one sister,” said Horace ; “ one already in dear Blanche, but Emily—”

“ I wish,” said Mrs. Vernon fixing her eyes upon her nephew’s face ; “ earnestly wish Blanche were not to you, a sister as you call her.”

A deep glow suddenly came upon the countenance of poor Horace ; “ What an opportunity ! what might he not have told if only, Blanche had *not* written that un-

lucky letter." These thoughts were more than he could bear ; they were standing by the open window, and unable to face his aunt's keen eyes, he sprang out upon the lawn, without giving her an answer.

Mrs. Vernon smiled as she watched him, smiled as she thought of his confusion.

" If any thing could make me more happy than I am," thought she ; " it would be that. So suited to one another ; both so good, so highly principled, so fond of one another too—yet there is a something, which has made me doubt—but his embarrassment ! Ah it will be some day I see !"

How wrongly are we judged by those who know us best.

Horace, poor fellow, paced the shrubberies, in a reverie, full of the most bitter thoughts ; what a deep injury Blanche had done him with his aunt ; and how completely ignorant was Mrs. Vernon of the state of things, when she could, cautious as she was, express a wish, that he should

marry Blanche—how strange it was that every one should think of that, except himself and her!—

Bright and happy, as many deemed the prospects of Horace Leigh, there were few people, favored as he was by outward things, who were so thoroughly unhappy as he was during his long and solitary walk—and yet he might so easily have been happy, could he have flung away the scruples of his delicate and grateful mind.

“If he would but have asked for more, where he had already received so much.”

He had put obstacles in his own path, for he had obliged poor penitent Blanche, to promise she would not, by word or deed, inform his aunt of his attachment, and in answer to her entreaties, he had at length qualified this exacted promise, by adding—

“Well—at least not yet—the time may come.” And with this she had been obliged to rest content and silent.

What strange creatures we are ; we shape our course, sometimes with desperate obsti-

nacy, knowing the while in our own hearts that we may bitterly repent it.

But it is no time to moralise when Langton Park, and High Elms, are in a fever of excitement, for the morning of the wedding has arrived, and Luke is calling hastily for this and that, and using no gentle language, right and left.

The bride is sitting in her white satin and lace, and Charlotte, with trembling lips and tearful eyes, is trying to steady her hand sufficiently to place the orange flower wreath upon the fair young head; at Emily's feet sits Carlo; but with the strange instinct of his race, he evidently sees something is the matter, and his large eyes are full of wonder.

“ Ah, Carlo dear! you see I'm going; yes to leave Papa, and Charlotte,—yes, and you, and Langton; I am *going*, Carlo;” and her voice, for the first time in her life, had such a tone of grief, that Carlo put his forepaws upon her bridal lace, and whined piteously.

“Hush Carlo, hush, don’t make me cry,” and Emily was more affected by the strange manner of the dog, than she had been in all her life before, a feeling of superstition came upon her, and she said to her sister—

“Is it not very unlucky to hear the howling of a dog?”

“Yes,” replied Charlotte, trying to laugh—“but Carlo only whined; and—there, my darling sister—you are ready now.”

She led her to the glass, and it reflected back so fair a sight, that Emily could not resist a smile.

A country wedding is a prettier sight than one in town; the school-children in new attire, all curtsying to the young lady they were so sorry to lose—the blessings of the old people, to whom she had been so kind from a young child—the personal interest of all the lookers on of the village that *their* young lady was going to be married—the picturesque appearance of the wedding party itself, who were all obliged to walk from the churchyard gate up to the

church door, displaying themselves, in all their bravery, to the admiring crowd, who could not restrain their shouts, when the bride and bridegroom, arm in arm, past through their ranks, after the ceremony: everything looked bright.

Emily had been rather nervous, but when once seated with Luke at the breakfast table, her spirits returned, and she laughed and talked merrily; whilst nestling at her feet, apparently shrinking from the merriment around, too happy to be her footstool, as if he had known it was for the last time, was Carlo.

Presently some one called her, in asking her to take wine, "Mrs. Leigh!"

She did not look up—she did not know it was to her they spoke; and when Luke whispered to her, and she understood, her laugh and blush were very beautiful.

Truly Luke Leigh was a most lucky man.

Then the time came when they must part—Emily, and her father; and she felt that a little, but not much—Luke gave her

so little time to take leave of them all ; he hurried her into the carriage—and they were gone.

A gloom came over the wedding guests ; there always is a blank when the chief actors of the scene are gone ; but there was a sad impression on all those who knew Luke Leigh ; they felt all was not gold that glittered : so the guests separated into pairs, and strolled hither and thither through the grounds ; Mrs. Vernon retired to rest herself till the evening ; but strange to say by far the most important circumstance of the remainder of the day was that Fred found himself neglected and alone.

CHAPTER XI.

It was seven o'clock on a lovely summer's morning, when a steamer, which had just started from Cologne, puffed and panted its smoky way up the sunny banks of the Rhine ; even at that early hour the passengers were already thinking of breakfast, for they had left their couches at the German hour of five.

Two merry English girls descended with their party into the cabin, for the purpose of taking this early refreshment ; and their attention was soon attracted by a young

couple seated at a small table, close to them, who, by the unnecessary proximity of their heads, and the vast variety "of nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles," were evidently lovers ; as they were quite alone, the probability and indeed the fact was, that they were newly married lovers.

The English party alluded to soon left the breakfast table for the deck ; and the young girls walked up and down, and, to amuse themselves, examined the boxes and bags piled up in order. One set of perfectly new partmanteaus, dressing-cases, and boxes of every description caught their eyes.

"I have a conviction," said one young girl to her sister, "that those things belong to our devoted friends down stairs !"

They looked at the name, which was ostentatiously displayed in brass plates upon each and all.

The name was Leigh.

"My dearest !" said Luke to his pretty wife, "I cannot stand this horrible cabin any longer—I must go."

“ Don’t leave me, Luke, for I can’t bear the deck.”

“ Oh, never mind—come up ; I can’t stay here,” said Luke, with a touch of his old self.

And Emily looked up at him in astonishment ; but after a moment’s thought, she put on her large shawl, with his ready assistance, and went with him on deck.

Emily seated herself on a small camp stool ; and after standing a few moments near her, with his sullen face all smiles, Luke nodded affectionately at her, and began to walk up and down the deck, for the sun had disappeared, and the wind was rising ; Emily took a book ; she glanced up and met the gaze of the two girls who were evidently English ; they could not resist looking at her, she was so pretty, and so *distinguée* in her appearance. She returned their gaze, but made no movement towards acquaintanceship—she was too young a traveller for that ; and so like half the English on the Rhine, she read in solitary

grandeur, instead of looking round to mark how different every object and every colour in earth or sky are to those in merry England, or amusing herself with the people and indeed the characters around her. Upon the whole, though, accustomed as she had been never to be alone, she began to think this travelling was very dull.

Meantime the two English girls were greatly enjoying themselves, they had both a slight knowledge of German, and were making use of it in the best way they could, a party of German's—who though not ladies were agreeable and well-behaved—had gladly entered into a laughable and highly amusing conversation with them, broken every two minutes by some sudden impossibility of understanding one another; the eldest of the two sisters had a quick wit and a quick ear, pronouncing sentences which she had learnt, in the most plausible manner, and with the most correct accent; so that her new German friends, deceived by her apparent proficiency, answered her in those

terribly long, involved sentences, not one word of which she could understand, whilst her slower sister unable to talk one half so plausibly, stammered her broken sentences, but as they shortened and simplified their answers to her, was able fully to understand them ! so the tortoise as usual won the race.

Presently one German, apparently a solid tradesman, seated near the helm, took up a leading part in the conversation with those around him ; and began to relate many amusing anecdotes ; by the smiles of the young English girl who understood, though seated at some distance from him, Emily, who perceived that he was making even the quiet Germans laugh, saw that he must be very entertaining, and she looked down at her book, with a wish that she too understood German ; not one word of this difficult language did Emily, or her husband comprehend, although she had the usual knowledge of French, acquired by a country girl who has never spoken to any foreigner but her master : Luke neither knew or under-

stood a word of either, but as they had a clever and energetic courier they had not as yet suffered much inconvenience, except that her lady's-maid who had lived with her from childhood came up to her at the hotel at Cologne in a violent state of agitation, declaring—

“That she never saw such a country in her life, there wasn't a bit of fire to be seen except through a little door into the oven, and the only bit of fire she could get to dry her wet cloak, was in a pan in a hen-coop !”

The morning was getting more and more chilly, so Emily beckoned to Luke, and told him she wished to descend into the cabin ; accustomed as he was to a great deal of active exercise he was not to be tempted there even to oblige her, and so the poor bride was left alone with her book, to her very great astonishment. She had now lost the amusement of the people who were around her on deck, and she was more dull than ever.

The hour was approaching when all Germany must have its noon-day meal—do what you will, go where you will in Germany, you may be certain at one o'clock of dinner—first of all the waiters spread the long tables, and poor Emily was driven into a corner, then stragglers came down one by one by instinct, to secure good places, and of these many with light moustache and light blue eyes, which with their broad faces proclaimed their nation ; here a Hungarian baron with a long beard ; there a Dutch officer with a short pointed beard looking like a Vandyke on leave of absence from its frame ; these and some ill-behaved Englishmen, one and all stared at so young and pretty a woman as Emily sitting there alone—occasionally she looked up, but meeting one after another the glances of these formidable faces all “ bearded like the Pard ” (though what a Pard is had always been a mystery to her, and some other readers of the phrase), she blushed more and more deeply, and tried to read calmly on—by

this she lost her opportunity of moving ; for her admiring neighbours had seated themselves near her, and her way to the deck was barred.

Presently the clatter of the long German dinner began with its roast beef after Vanille cream, and fish after puddings—and when Luke at last descended to look for poor Emily, he could neither reach the place where she was sitting nor could she come to him.

She was not dining, for they intended to spend the rest of the day at Ehrenbreitstein ; and there she sat, poor inexperienced young traveller, in a really unpleasant situation.

Time will bring all things to an end ; and at last Luke reached the seat by his poor wife, who, with the tears in her eyes, said—

“ Oh, Luke, how *could* you leave me here, alone ?”

“ How could you put yourself into this out of the way corner,” said Luke—“ why didn’t you come on deck ?”

“ I really felt afraid to move,” replied poor Emily ; “ they all came crowding in ; I thought of nothing but getting out of the way. You should have come to me, dear Luke.”

“ You couldn’t expect me to come and sit in this horrid place,” said Luke ; “ all your own fault, my love ; why did you come down here at all—and what upon earth did you get into this scrape for ?”

“ I really couldn’t help it,” said poor Emily. “ I expected you every moment ; it was so very dull here all alone ; and then when they all came down to dinner, the clatter and the noise—you hav’n’t an idea how horrible it was.”

“ All your own fault,” said Luke getting cross at the very shadow of blame to himself.

“ And then, Luke, dear, those men stared at me so, I really was quite terrified ; and some of them spoke to me, Luke !”

“ All your own fault,” replied the young husband, with his old spirit coming fast upon

him ; “ if you hadn’t stared at them they wouldn’t have stared at you.”

To this most unjust accusation the young wife only answered “ Luke !” but the tone of her voice spoke volumes ; and a part of her love for her husband departed from that hour—never to return again.

She could scarcely believe he could have spoken so, except in joke ; and at the idea she turned her fair face to his, with her own sunny smile ; but upon his face was the sullen home-look, which *she* had never seen before.

Luke was indignant !

“ Well, Emily,” he said, “ if my only reward for coming down into this hole of a cabin, with the remains of the dinner, is to be a series of reproaches, I shall leave you. I will not be found fault with by my own wife.”

“ I did not mean to blame you,” said Emily, in a sweet, humble voice—“ only I have been so miserable for these last two

hours;—if you are going, take me with you, Luke.”

And he sullenly and silently handed her into a place on the deck, and left her to pursue his walk. He was thoroughly out of temper.

And this was their first quarrel.

When Luke Leigh was angry he must visit it upon somebody ; he never recovered himself until he had had a battle royal, if not with the original cause or object of his ire, it must be with some one else; and being now, after a long interval of peace and quiet, thoroughly put out, and not liking as yet to carry the quarrel with his pretty bride any farther, he was literally looking out for some offence from somebody.

The opportunity was not long to be waited for. On landing at Coblentz, and crossing the bridge of boats, which spans the Rhine, to the inn at the foot of the castle; difficulties arose with the carriage, and venting his pent up wrath upon the unlucky courier, Luke finally paid and dismissed him.

And then their troubles began !

The money ! of which a *handful* is worth nothing, and copper apparently more valuable than silver.

The arrangements, in which you feel confident you are cheated, if you did but know how !

The delightful feeling of not knowing one word of all that is said to you on the most important subjects !—it was very particularly pleasant.

The very next morning, Mrs. Cole, the lady's maid, rather ironically enquired of her mistress how the boxes were to be corded. By dint of an application a porter was summoned, but as the waiter, who could say yes and no, in English, was called away, poor Emily was left face to face with the stupid, but good-tempered German, to explain what she wanted.

This, by dint of an expressive pantomime, of drawing with her finger an imaginary cord round the box, and tying with her

pretty little hands an imaginary knot on the top, she perfectly succeeded in.

It was now the turn of the stolid porter to explain by shrugging his heavy shoulders and spreading his broad hands out in despair, after looking all about the room in a very odd way, that he did not see any cord!

Mrs. Cole who had been standing by, looking very helpless and very much disgusted was also appealed to, and asserted to her mistress—

“That the poor, dear currier, who was gone, had left it downstairs,” and she involuntarily added, “and what we are to do without him *I* don’t know.”

Poor Emily was amazingly puzzled, and after expending all her powers of pantomime in vain; her only resource was to beckon to the despairing porter to follow all the way down the long gallery of the hotel to the staircase; down which she energetically pointed, after drawing an imaginary and very long piece of cord repeatedly through her fair fingers.

The porter stared at her in a vacant manner for some moments, then suddenly comprehending her, he smiled and nodded at Emily in the most familiar and good-natured manner, and leisurely proceeded down stairs; taking his time, like all his people, to such a degree, that Emily began to fear he would never come back.

Mrs. Cole's indignation at this affair of the cord was very great.

"Well, ma'am, I never saw such a thing as a young lady like you obliged to act just like a scene in a pantomime with a porter—never; and as to this country, ma'am, one might just as well be deaf and dumb as to be obliged to behave as if one was!"

All this time Luke was endeavouring to start for Emms by a certain hour, and enraged at their slowness, and furious at their not understanding him, he was using language by no means suited to ears polite to all those whom he encountered in the neighbourhood of the stables.

At last they started, and without con-

sidering for a moment, that all this unnecessary trouble was entirely his own doing, he worried poor Emily during the whole of the picturesque drive with his violent anger at everybody.

Every half hour Luke vociferated to the two Germans to go faster, but they only looked round displaying more clearly than ever, that they were quietly smoking! nodded, repeated in a deep bass—"Ja Wohl," and went on as slowly as ever.

But that was a minor grievance, time and patience brought them to the pretty little Town of Nassau, perched on the banks of the Lahn which in many respects is more lovely than the Rhine itself; here they would gladly have stopped to take some refreshment, but they could not by any ingenuity manage to do so.

"Stop you fellow, I say stop!" shouted Luke.

"Ja Wohl," said the imperturbable German, and on he went.

“ Arretez vous, Cocher—je vous en prie,” said Emily.

“ Ja Wohl,” replied the other man jogging on faster, which he believed to be the meaning of her words.

“ Stop,” shouted Luke again, “ why the —— don’t you stop,” and the man, frightened at the thundering voice, and at the fist which the angry Englishman was shaking at him, went through the town in which they so much desired to stop at an unusually brisk pace.

Luke put his head through one window and Emily through the other, and in the extremity of her fright at Luke’s violent rage, she even *tried Italian*! but that was of no use, and on they went. They could not stop the imperturbable Germans.

Luke did not like the look of Emms, so he determined upon going on, though Emily entreated him to stay a day just to see Emms. There, at the hotel, waiters could speak some English, and Luke managed to

make his refractory people understand, that he wished to go on to Schwalbach.

Half way between that place and Emms is a small road side inn, of the very smallest pretensions, situated in the ugliest part of a road which had become very uninteresting, with nothing to look at—nothing to amuse.

At the door of this inn the carriage stopped, and a polite landlord came bowing and smiling to the door which he opened.

Angry at this, Luke ordered him to shut it, which he would doubtless have done if he had had any idea what the gentleman meant.

But there he stood blandly smiling, holding the door open with one hand, and pointing with the other to a very uninviting-looking “salle.”

“Go on,” vociferated Luke.

“Ja Wohl,” replied the postillions, coolly getting off their horses.

“Go on, I say—go to the ——,” shouted Luke.

“Ja Wohl,” replied the Germans, taking the horses off the carriage, and leaving it in the road without them.

Luke jumped out, and seizing one of the horses, endeavoured to harness it again, but the extraordinary arrangements made for that purpose, were quite incomprehensible to him. By the time he had given it up in despair, the postillion had brought water and bread, with which he began, in dumb show, to prove to Luke, that the horse, of which he had taken forcible possession, needed rest and food—and at last, feeling quite at their mercy, Luke handed his wife to one end of the Salle, whilst Mrs. Cole took a place at the other.

Luke’s vehement expostulations with the landlord were met with shrugs and smiles, and there they had to wait, doing nothing, with nothing even to look at!—Luke saw an English carriage *with a Courier* drive up, and *off*—but whatever he felt at that provoking sight, he said nothing.

People with, what are usually denomi-

nated, quick tempers, should never visit Germany, their trials will be too severe. At the first town of any consequence, Luke, to the great surprise of his wife, enquired not for a Courier, as she had fondly hoped, but for a German master ; a very agreeable and intelligent person presented himself, and having, unluckily, rather a sense of the ridiculous, he could hardly keep up a necessary gravity, when Luke requested him to give him a list, of all the most emphatic terms of abuse ! took great and serious pains to master the pronunciation, and rang the bell for the waiter, to practise upon.

Having properly pronounced an unlimited number of “Dumkopf’s,” as much to his satisfaction, as to the very natural dissatisfaction of the unoffending waiter, Luke Leigh expressed himself highly delighted and exceedingly obliged to the German master, with whom he warmly shook hands, —declared, “he should get on now,” and not choosing to learn another word of the language, politely dismissed him.

Of the delights of having people vehemently explain something, that it is evidently absolutely necessary for you to understand, whilst you stand, with open eyes and ears, totally unable to catch their meaning; of these delights, Emily and Mrs. Cole had a considerable share, as of course the maid-servants were rarely linguists—but they were such good natured, affectionate creatures, and became so soon attached to Emily's pretty face, and kind manners, that they exerted their limited minds to the utmost, to understand her wishes—and on one occasion when she gave one of the hand-maidens an unexpected gratuity, the poor German girl was so delighted, that she actually embraced her—they are good creatures, the Germans.

But the climax of their many mistakes and troubles was yet to come.

Luke did not find his carefully acquired vocabulary of much use, as the awful words, were met with a quiet good temper, which deprived them of their sting, and

Emily found her French, nearly as useless, except with the ladies and gentlemen of different countries ; but with these, after the laudable fashion of some of our English travellers, they made little or no acquaintance, though the slightest advance on their part would have been politely received, and cordially reciprocated. So after all, the life they led, was nearly a long *tête à tête* ; and in point of fact—a very dull one.

One day, the morning had been very rainy, and Weisbaden looked quite deserted, but Luke sallied out with an umbrella, and told Emily, that if it cleared up sufficiently he would return and take her for a walk.

Emily threw herself on the sofa, in her own room, and took a book, but it proved so uninteresting, that by degrees, the noises of the hotel died away to her ears, and she fell asleep.

She was awakened by a knock at the door, and sleepily desiring Mrs. Cole, as she supposed it to be, to come in ; a waiter opened the door, and said—

“ If you plesse you *muss* come down.”

She looked so startled and alarmed, for a moment, at the strange voice, and not perceiving that it was the waiter, who could speak French, but could not speak English, she answered—

“ What is the matter ?” in so frightened a voice, that he, not comprehending her, was frightened too, and showed it plainly.

“ Mattur !” said the man — “ Monsieur !”

“ Mr. Leigh ?” asked Emily, forgetting that he had said, he might send her a message.

“ Ye-es,” said the waiter alarmed, he didn’t know why.

“ What is it,” said she, catching up her bonnet.

“ You mus-ss come down derecly,” replied the man.

“ Is any thing the matter,” enquired poor Emily again.

“Ye-es, ye-es!” said the man, who had not an idea what she meant.

“Is it an accident—has anything happened to Mr. Leigh,” said Emily, breathlessly hurrying down the long gallery, with the man after her.

“Ye-es—ye-es,” replied the now terrified waiter, feeling that something was wrong, though he had not an idea what!

“Is he hurt?”

“Yes,” replied the unconscious Kellner.

“Is he much hurt—oh, is he killed!” said poor Emily, whose trembling limbs could scarcely carry her in safety down the stairs, so certain was she, that something terrible had happened to poor Luke—something they dared not tell her—visions of every horrible kind floated before her, and she leant against the passage wall, unable to stand, as she repeated—

“Is he killed—oh, is he dead.”

“Yes,” said the unlucky waiter.

“Where,” almost shrieked poor Emily.

“These way,” said the poor Kellner,

enchanted to hear something he could understand.

And along the passage, through one Salle into another, then into a third, tottered poor Emily, in the deepest distress, and there, as she suddenly turned into the room, expecting to see she knew not what, perhaps the crushed and mangled corpse of her unfortunate husband, there stood Luke, waiting for her with his hat on, whistling a galloppe!—

CHAPTER XII.

THE party who had been staying at High Elms, returned to town, and Horace returned to his books and his law studies. Frederick Keane was not in quite such an amiable mood as he had been; he felt himself neglected, and he fancied himself laughed at. In truth when things go wrong with people, they are apt to visit their worries, or disappointments, upon the object nearest at hand; and as Horace, for a

young, prosperous and courted man, had had as many worries as could well be crowded into the short space of a few months, it must not be denied, that he had occasionally shown less than his usual patience, towards the simplicities of his friend and companion.

So Fred often sat in Horace Leigh's chambers, in the uncomfortable chair, for he had not succeeded in importing an easier lounging place, in a very innocently sulky mood. The consequence of his being less supremely happy in the mere presence of his friend, was that Fred now began to find, or try to find amusement for himself; people could not write novels so fast as he could read them, and there were hours on hours, when he did not know what on earth to do with himself, or his time.

He began by asking Horace, what he had better do!—but being made to feel the absurdity of the question, by his friend's laughing advice, he determined, by a great mental effort, to find some amusement for

himself, and in the innocence of his heart, he could think of nothing better than making long visits, at all the houses of his lady friends—his conversation being of an order perfectly compatible with work ; (so much so that Blanche could talk and listen to him—counting her threads just as accurately as if he were not there ;) his visits were generally welcomed ; and as he was in every way presentable and eligible, he usually received an invitation to dinner, which led to farther, and longer calls on his part, and so the idle and gentle Frederick Keane, contrived to get rid of some of the time that hung so heavily on his hands ; the longest of his visits were bestowed upon the Trevors, but as Blanche was engaged in working a chair which was, when finished, to be presented to Mrs. Luke Leigh, she did not mind him much !

Their conversations were worth hearing, from their *interesting* nature.

“ Have you been out to-day, Miss Trevor ? ” enquired Fred, fixing his beautiful eyes upon Blanche, and admiring the

elegance of her head and throat as she bent over her work.

"One, two," said Blanche.

"Two walks already?" interrupted Keane, his astonishment not allowing him to wait for the rest of her answer,

"Two stitches, and no walk," answered Blanche. "I beg your pardon for counting out loud, but I was just doing my Turkish lady's eyes, and I might have made her squint horribly."

"It is a most wonderful thing the way you work horses and dogs, by counting one, two, three! I cannot comprehend it."

"It requires great genius!" said Blanche, gravely.

"Oh, I dare say," said Keane; "but you can do anything, Miss Trevor."

"Good or bad," added Blanche.

"You do a great deal of mischief; hearts, and all that," said Fred, trying to look insinuating, but only looking silly.

"A prettily turned compliment," said Blanche; "so well expressed."

"If I said all I thought, every word would be a compliment."

"Well done," said Blanche. "You found that sentence in a book, Mr. Keane!"

"I did!" confessed the conscience-stricken Fred.

"It is no use trying to deceive me," said Blanche, shaking her head in a very alarming manner; "where did it come from?"

"The last new novel," stammered Keane. "You see quite through and through me!"

And he felt hurt; for he had taken great pains to remember that one sentence, having forgotten all the rest of a new book, on purpose to make use of it; he had watched for his opportunity, had triumphantly brought it forward; and then—she had found him out—knew where it came from! Oh, she was decidedly too clever!

He sat quite silent and unhappy.

"Don't take it to heart," laughed Blanche—"seven, eight, nine, ten—not one person in twenty would have discovered your secret; only, unluckily, I read—"

“ Oh, so do I,” said Fred, brightening up — “ all the new novels.”

“ You can say that pretty sentence to some one else you know—it need not be lost,” said Blanche, with a friendly but mischievous nod.

“ Perhaps I shall,” said Fred, in a pettish voice.

“ Eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve,” said Blanche.

“ What pretty coloured silk,” said Fred.

“ Very,” answered Blanche.

And there was a silence ; not one of those eloquent pauses—when the heart is too full for words, and all that sort of thing, but a bona fide silence—for want of anything to say.

“ Twenty, twenty-one,” said Blanche.

“ This is a miserable world !” observed Fred.

What a startling and unexpected remark !” said Blanche, raising her eyes in great astonishment — “ where did you get that from ?”

“ That’s original,” said Fred—“ I feel it. One can’t do anything one wants to do in this world ; and one can’t say anything one wants to say.”

“ What upon earth do you mean ?” said Blanche, carefully threading her needle.

“ It’s a wretched truth,” answered Fred, in an absent manner.

“ He’s mad,” thought Blanche ; “ poor creature ! evidently temporary insanity ; he can’t mean anything—he never does.”

“ I mean,” said Keane, “ that everything is a bore and a trouble—that everything goes wrong—and the people one cares for most, laugh at one !”

This was coming rather home.

“ Horace only laughs at you because he cares for you more than he does for any one else in the world.”

“ I was not thinking of Horace ; and I don’t know that he laughs at me—at least, I never can be quite sure that he does,” answered Keane.

And Blanche was silenced ; for she had

stupidly admitted that she thought that Horace did laugh at him.

"I don't think Horace *is* so much attached to me," continued Fred.

"I know it—certainly know it," replied Blanche.

"There are others he loves better," said Fred, looking at her hard, with the expectation of seeing her colour rise.

"If you mean me," said Blanche, coolly looking up at him, "certainly not."

"Is it possible?" said Fred in a very animated tone of voice.

"He would give up anything and everybody rather than you," said Blanche, "and you ought to know it."

"Is it possible?" repeated Keane in an odd and absent manner, "that Horace does not care for you."

"Quite possible indeed," said Blanche stooping down very eagerly over her work.

"If you could be serious for one moment, only one little moment."

“ I am serious enough—on this subject,” said Blanche, with a contraction of the eyebrows as if she were suffering from a sudden pain.

“ If you would only attend to me,” said Fred, “ I would tell you—”

“ What ?” said the lady after waiting some time.

“ Nothing,” said Keane.

“ Too bad of you,” said Blanche, clipping the ends of worsted at the back of her work, “ to begin to tell me some dreadful news—and if dreadful, of course, interesting, and then not to finish your sentence.”

“ Do you wish me to finish it ?” said Fred, with the colour rushing over his handsome face.

“ Of course I do,” said Blanche, when she had carefully counted to the top of the turban of the figure she was working, “ three-hundred and seventy-eight.”

“ Well, then (here goes),” these words were added to himself *et pour s’encourager*. —“ Well, then the person I care for most,

who makes me miserable by laughing at all I say, is you—and what I have to say is—How d'ye do, Mrs. Trevor,” added the unfortunate young man; for at the very moment when he was about to make a desperate declaration to the daughter, the mama entered the room, and he had to sit and talk about the weather.

It was a very strange thing, that, with all her cleverness, Blanche Trevor was so accustomed to Frederick's pretty and silly little speeches, that being much more occupied with the Turkish lady than with him, she thought he was merely talking his usual little nonsenses, and did not in the slightest degree perceive that this time poor, dear Fred was in deep and serious earnest. So she talked and smiled just as usual during the rest of his unconscionably long visit—he lingered on in the vain hope of sitting Mrs. Trevor out, and then went home determined to speak to Blanche again on the very first opportunity that should offer itself.

He had that curious longing for change

of some kind, which strange to say often precedes a change over which we have had little or no controul; Fred was actually getting tired of Horace; a few months before, had Fred been told that this could be the case, how indignant would have been his denial of the possibility of such a thing, and yet it was in some degree the case; a restlessness, an impatience at seeing Horace sag so steadily at his profession was coming over Fred, and a something approaching to recklessness, if such a word could apply to such a gentle character as his, was overcoming his fear even of Blanche; and he had a vague idea, that if he could but make her love him she would not laugh at him! for he saw through the veil of her polished manners more than she imagined he did, and often perceived the latent, and indeed, involuntary ridicule of her words.

He feared and yet admired her, and more than that, he could but feel that she was the wife for him—he felt that with her for the mistress of his house, and the partner of

his destiny, that come what would, he should have no trouble!

And it is not to be denied that this was to him a great attraction!

When, however, he had before thought of this and wished, and tried as far as he was able, to make himself acceptable to the fascinating but formidable object of his long standing admiration, one idea had always stood between them—he firmly believed that there was an attachment between Blanche and his friend Horatio, as he styled him.

In the course of that morning's interesting and intellectual conversation, the earnestness with which Blanche denied the imputation, and the coolness with which she met his gaze, gave him, for the first time, an idea and a vivid hope that he might be wrong. Being the very creature of impulse he had all but proposed in his delight at his discovery; but when he came to think it over, as well as he could think, it struck him that, though it was evident that Blanche Trevor did not love her cousin, save as a

cousin—it was not so certain, whatever she might say or think, that Horace did not love her—and so he was thrown again into a state of painful uncertainty.

“ Nothing, he muttered to himself, as he walked along—“ nothing should make me interfere with Horace ; and it would be no use if I did.”

It is an opinion of some, who have founded it upon facts, that when people have made up their minds that anything is impossible, it is sure to take place.

Poor Fred was worried ; it was something new to him to have an anxiety weighing upon his mind ; and his usually open brow was wrinkled up, and his generally smiling mouth was contracted into an expression of thought and trouble, which sat strangely upon one whose countenance had no other habitual expression than careless good-humour ; he walked slowly on, without a trace of his usual liveliness of gait and manner ; but with a sudden change of idea, peculiar to those who are not gifted with

many of them, he altered his course; in so doing he soon after, at the turn of a corner, encountered Horace.

“What’s the matter, Fred?” enquired his friend, who instantly saw a difference in him; “you don’t look like yourself.”

“I hope it’s an improvement?” enquired Fred, with a nervous smile. “You’re going to the Trevor’s, of course?”

“I am,” replied Horace—“and you?”

“I’m going to call upon the Walgraves,” answered Fred; “they are very kind—and I have no where else to go.”

“I found them all at home,” answered his friend; and so they parted.

Sir Josiah was sitting in his study, whilst Fred was endeavouring to entertain the ladies, in the drawing-room; the principal effect of his calling so often and so long upon them was to make them wonder what he came for so often—and wish he would go a little sooner.

The machine for extinguishing had not again endangered the safety of the house;

the fragments of the not-to-be-stopped-grinding-machine had been of course removed, and another very complicated little model, for the useful purpose of cooking without fire, or at least with so little as not to be worth mentioning, filled its place. It had been set in motion in the morning, and was generally supposed to be engaged in making soup; luckily, it was quite harmless.

It had been agreed between Mr. Simmons, the enthusiast, and Sir Josiah, the capitalist, that any payments should be as nearly as possible divided between them, as long as Mr. Simmons could find the means, that then Sir Josiah should stand in the gap—to be fully repaid, and to share the immense profits—when the invention answered.

He has just received the following letter from his friend and coadjutor: it related to their first difficulty.

“Dear Sir,

“I have just received yours; I wrote to you on Monday, accounting for your not

having heard from me before. I am very sorry there has been any difficulty about the draft you allude to; it was through a mistake of mine, as I had forgotten to write to the house, where it was made payable, about it.

“I send by this post to Mr. Bull a draft on the same bankers, for 360*l.*, to cover this draft, and to give him some money in hand to go on with. The balance in hand has always been kept very low, for two reasons: first, I wish not to charge more to the concern than it actually takes; and if I were to keep a large balance in it, the interest on that would make the weight heavier; secondly, I wish to keep the balance as large as I can in my private bankers' hands, that they may be inclined to help me at a pinch.

“I am very sorry my illness keeps and kept me down here at the trial, last Monday; I am very glad it went off so well. If there are any more particulars besides what will appear in the papers, pray send them to

me, as I am anxious to know all about it.

“On again reading your letter, I will observe that this draft, which has been refused payment, is the first that has been so out of above 7,000*l.* of my share of expenses, which has been already actually paid on account of the two concerns.

“After so much larger a capital being expended than ever had been either conceived or intended by us, it cannot be wondered at if there should be now and then a hitch. I can only say that if I had had an idea that that last improvement would have cost so much, and produced so little, no power or persuasion would have induced me to lead you into it. I am quite satisfied with the rest of the concern.

“That goes on well—there has been no mismanagement as far as I or Mr. Murdock are concerned in the business, but I am certain of this, that unless the sales of the new ones are doubled, the change will not pay its own expenses. It is now a great

and increasing loss to us, besides all the trouble.

“ I write ill, and in great haste, to save post ; these things are truly vexatious, because so very unexpected.

“ I am, dear sir,

“ Yours, very sincerely,

“ William Edward Simmons.”

Sir Josiah sat with a puzzled look, thinking about this letter ; he had been a good deal startled by finding a draft, drawn by Simmons, for a considerable sum, had been dishonored ; he had been nothing more or less than frightened ; although he had known from the first, that the inheritance which his friend had embarked in the concern was not by any means inexhaustible ; still the possibility of a refusal of payment had never presented itself to his mind, till it came upon him in a tangible and alarming shape. The funds of Mr. Simmons had

surely not begun to fail him already? that prospect was far from agreeable; luckily it did not appear to be the case, as the letter just received, proved that the occurrence had been accidental, and its remedy had been instantly forthcoming. Still there was a something about the answer, which grated very unpleasantly upon Sir Josiah's mind—"he had forgotten to write," with all his admiration for the unquestionable talent, indeed genius, of Mr. Simmons, Sir Josiah never felt certain of the unqualified truth of his assertions; he was a sanguine enthusiast, and Sir Josiah had learnt from a long and intimate acquaintance with the inventor, to receive what he said with a qualification of some kind—he *might* have forgotten certainly, because he was ill, but it was to say the least of it, not very likely. However *that* he must banish from his thoughts, the evil was remedied.

But the close of the enthusiast's epistle merited serious attention;—certain of success, hopeful to a degree that *he* should

think, or at least allow that he thought of loss, was very disheartening, even to his equally sanguine coadjutor. Thousands had already been swallowed up, and yet poor Sir Josiah felt that the worst was yet to come ; for that before long his property must furnish the supplies, alone !

The prospect was highly disagreeable even when imaginary, what would it be when real ! Still there was before them the grand field of success ; till this last unfortunate improvement, they had been doing very well, since then the sales, upon which they had depended, of course, for their returns, had been falling off, and the dishonored draft might and must do them harm. Sir Josiah began to rue the day, when he had been tempted, with such a specious cleverness, to embark his capital so largely in the concern, although he had had little cause for regret, as yet.

As he cooled down, he thought that he had been perhaps unjust ; he could scarcely expect such complicated business to go on

without a check, as it had hitherto done, and yet he did not like the letter,—it was very unlike Simmons ; wavering, uncertain, odd ; and by an annoying coincidence Sir Josiah had been playing whist till late the night before, with some old friends, and one of them had a habit of repeating his words, over and over again, four or five times, however unimportant they might be ; and as he sat looking at the letter which, had caused him so much anxiety, and annoyance, the words used most by his friend the General would come back into his head again and again, haunting him as an air will haunt one, and he did not like it ; the words seemed to apply themselves to Simmons, and his epistle ; they were, “ Shuffle and cut, shuffle and cut, shuffle and—cut.”

Sir Josiah was quite worried, it seemed to him an omen of ill-luck.

One would really have supposed that some mischievous little demons were amusing

themselves with whispering to him the provoking words.

Sir Josiah had found some truth in the representations of his clever friend ; men of science and men of business equally approved of the scheme in which they were embarked, and now private friends were diligently endeavouring to procure for one branch of it the patronage of Government—if that could be won, all would go right—the outlay would be nothing to the enormous profits.

So thought and dreamed Sir Josiah, and losing himself in the labyrinth of his own hopes, the sanguine capitalist gradually allowed all graver and sadder views of the subject to fade from his mind, he thought and *would* think, of nothing but the great success, which had hitherto crowned every experiment and trial ; even that last, over which some of the papers of the day were still ringing their applause ; it had been uphill-work, but now, surely the hill top would

soon be gained, and in every sense he should be repaid—so his anxious look smoothed itself down, and he began to put away his papers in preparation for his afternoon ride—but as he took up the letter again in his ears seemed to be whispered, in the cross-grained voice of the old General—

“ Shuffle—and—cut.”

The family failing of the Walgraves was working its way to harm.

A few miles out of town, in one of the thousand villas which encircle the Metropolis, leading one to wonder where all the people come from who inhabit them, and where all the money comes from, which they spend therein, an invalid was lying on a sofa at an open window, enjoying the delicious softness of the summer air ; he was propped up with pillows, a table with every little comfort he could fancy or wish for, ripe fruit, fresh water, and amusing books were just within his reach, a bouquet of fresh flowers were lavishing their sweetness close to him—a shawl was carefully thrown over his feet ;

it was evident that he was loved and watched, tenderly cared for, and anxiously nursed. The invalid was reading, one after another, letters upon business ; with knitted brows and impatient gestures he flung one by, only to take up another—some of them he read twice, a proceeding generally unnecessary to one with a head so clear, and intellect accustomed to such work ; but he had been ill, very ill, and his powers of attention were weaker than was their wont.

The letters, be their import what it might, evidently grieved and irritated him—writing materials were within his reach—after a moment's consideration he wrote, and a frown grew darker and darker upon his brow ; he finished that letter and began another, but his ill-recovered strength totally failed him, and he fell back upon his heap of pillows much exhausted, and a fit of coughing seized him.

At the first sound of his cough a quiet but interesting little woman, who had been anxiously listening in the next room, rose

and came up to him; a faint smile came upon his lips as she bent down with an affectionate look to hear what she could do for him; he gave her the full fascination of his peculiar smile, though they had been for many a long and toilsome year—man and wife.

He tasted some of the fruit, refreshed himself with rest, and then Mr. Simmons began to dictate to his patient and devoted wife, the answers to the different letters he had received, and she grew paler as she wrote.

CHAPTER XIII.

BLANCHE was sitting in the back drawing-room before her easel, she was about to take her last lesson of the interesting and philosophical Mr. Spildin, and she had requested Horace, who was getting rather tired of the little man and his absurd phraseology, to attend his last lecture. Ladies see so little of character in their smooth passage through every day life, that Blanche, elegant and refined as she was, enjoyed hearing Mr. Spildin's extraordinary conversation as

much as a naturalist would enjoy the examination of a creature whose nature and habits were altogether new to him.

He did not enter the room with his usual happy smirk, "he was so very sorry it was his last lesson he was." He bowed to Horace in solemn silence, and then intently examined the nearly finished copy which Blanche had been making of his picture.

"Good, splendidly good," said he, "I only wish Ogland could see that copy—that I do; would you believe it, mum! but Ogland have been heard to say, that I can't paint!"

"What odious calumny!" said his indignant pupil.

"Odious indeed, though I don't rightly know what a calumny is; but *I* think if he'd a seen your picture here, he wouldn't say that again, for sure it stand to reason as nobody hav'n't taught you but I, if *I* couldn't have painted, *you* couldn't have painted, mum!"

“A most unanswerable argument,” said Horace.

“My arguments *is* unanswerable,” said the painter, “Mrs. Spildin find ’em so, and that’s saying a deal!”

“Perfectly convincing,” answered Horace, *sotto voce*.

“Ogland paint he do, but not so well as me, though I say it that should’nt,” continued the modest artist, “but he’s so proud—he would’nt give lessons now as I do, mum, to you for half-a-crown, and he could’nt do it for more. Then I paint any think I do; but he don’t—I painted a tea caddy last week for two pound fifteen I did—but he wouldn’t—I’ve painted for one lady, very rich, at Islington, four screens, and one work-box—I paint any think I’m asked, but *he* wouldn’t paint nothing but pictures, and pictures, mum, is drugs in the market!”

“What?” enquired the mystified Blanche, to the excited little artist.

"Nobody wont buy 'em, mum," sullenly explained Mr. Spildin.

"A shocking want of taste," replied his pupil, bowing to apply the speech to her attentive master.

"You *may* say that," replied the little man—"Ogland find that! People do say he's splendid, and all that; but he get nothink by it. It's my philosophy to weigh everythink by that—'what do you get by it?' That's what I call the grand question, mum."

"A noble sentiment," said Horace, gravely.

"Ogland, sir, he rave—he talk about art. Oh, art is good, it is; but money is better—'specially if you've a family! Even a half-a-crown is better than art, if you've your bills to pay!"

Poor Blanche, who was devoted to pictures, could scarcely stand these sentiments; and the paper which Horace carefully held up before his face shook very perceptibly in his hand.

“Ogland’s too proud, he is. I’m above being proud,” said Mr. Spildin, with conscious dignity; “I should think it quite beneath me to be proud, and let my children want for anything.”

“Your feelings are a credit to you,” said Horace. “How many children have you?”

“Five, sir—it’s many mouths to feed; and if I was too proud to teach young ladies, and paint tea-caddies, what would become of them?”

Nobody answered this question; so he went on.

“I don’t care *what* I do for money!” said the artist, evidently not in the least aware that the sentiment was by no means a moral one, in its simple and unqualified state. “Now Ogland has a family; and what’s the consequence of all his pride—they starve. I go without my pride—they go without their dinners! I bring up my children—five on ’em—like gentlemen and ladies, oh, I do; but he don’t bring his up

at all. They goes without their dinners—so what's the use of pride!"

"I have heard sermons upon the subject," said Horace, gravely, and for once, saying what he ought not to say, "but, by Jove, your arguments are splendid."

"I know they are—I'm famous for my arguments; and I sums up. Money is better than art—and dinners is better than pride! I can't say more."

"I should think not," said Horace, drily.

And Mr. Spildin carefully put up his pictures, took a respectful leave of Miss Trevor, and bowing to Horace, received the sum total of his half-crowns from Mrs. Trevor, and departed with a feeling of regret. Blanche was not only his best pupil, but his best listener too.

When he was really gone, Horace took out a letter from his mother, and placed it in Mrs Trevor's hands.

"This seems to be written in great anxiety," observed his aunt, giving it back to him.

“ I fear it is,” said Horace; “ but my dear mother has been nervous about my father, for some time, so I will hope he is not really ill. She asked me several times how I thought him looking, when we were all at High Elms for Luke’s wedding ; but I could not see anything to be anxious about.”

“ He has been such a strong person, all his life,” observed Mrs. Trevor, “ that the least symptom of failing frightens my poor sister ; and yet, as we grow old, we must expect to feel the weight of years.”

“ My mother tells me that he was complaining of a numbness in one arm—do you think that of any consequence ?” enquired Horace.

“ It may be so,” said Mrs. Trevor, gravely ; “ it is one of those ailments that may be very serious, or nothing—I cannot say ; but perhaps, Horace, as Luke is in Germany, it would be better if you just went down to see your father ; it would at least be a comfort to my sister, if she is frightened.”

“ I do not feel so sure of that,” said Horace, with a bitterness which he could not controul ; “ if it were Luke—”

His aunt looked at him in surprise. Long as she had seen him suffer under the system of favoritism pursued at Leigh, he had always borne it in silence.

Perhaps what Fred said was true, and he was not so good-tempered as he had been : disappointment will sour the character sometimes ; and those who have most within them the power of vivid enjoyment are those who feel disappointment most severely.

“ My sister clings to you in her anxiety,” said Mrs. Trevor kindly ; - “ she feels your value, Horace, make her feel it more by going down, if but for a few days.”

“ She will think, perhaps, I only go to Leigh because you and the gay world in general, are leaving town,” said Horace.

“ Don’t think such foolish things,” said Blanche, “ do as you are ordered, Horace, mama so seldom gives advice, I always follow it when she does.”

And she gave her mother an affectionate look across the table at which she was sitting.

"Impertinent as usual you see," said Mrs. Trevor to her nephew; "but as we are two to one we must be right—what everybody says must be true."

"Leaving town just now is very inconvenient to me," said Horace, "for many reasons; but, notwithstanding that, if you really think that I can be of use, or even a comfort to my mother, I will go at once; only you cannot wonder that I am slow to think I can be either wanted or wished for at the Leigh."

This was a speech that neither Mrs. Trevor, or Blanche herself could answer as they wished, so they were silent.

"Horace is getting very bitter, Blanche," said Mrs. Trevor when he was gone.

"It is his natural character," was her answer.

"He hides it very well," said his aunt.

“Controuls it, dear mama,” suggested Blanche.

“Just as you please, my dear,” said the acquiescent mother.

The next morning’s post decided Horace upon leaving town without delay; it brought, in another letter from poor Mrs. Leigh, the startling intelligence that her fears had been but two well-founded; that his father had been seized with paralysis, and that the medical men were anticipating another stroke; she entreated Horace to come down to her at once; his presence would be the greatest comfort she could have, till she could summon Luke.

Taking a hasty leave in Grosvenor Square, he parted with Fred, whose piteous face deserved compassion as he said in the most melancholy tone:

“What on earth shall I do without you, everybody is going out of town, and I have no where to go.”

“Run down to Brighton, the Trevors will be there.”

“No, no,” said Frederick, in a pettish tone, “I shan’t go anywhere or see anybody—I shall just wait for you in town.”

“You can come down to Leigh if my poor father should get well.”

“Oh, never mind, you will be back again soon, old fellow.”

“I hope so, but I cannot tell.”

“It’s duty and *all that*; Horatio’s going down,” soliloquised his friend, after seeing him start, “but he *must* think it is a horrid bore—I should.”

Frederick Keane was selfish in a gentle, quiet, silly, and amiable way!

When Horace first saw his father, he was delighted to find him so much less ill than he expected; he had never seen much of a sick chamber, and had an undefined dread of one, but the old Squire had rallied quickly, far more so than had been at first anticipated, and was seated in his arm-chair as usual in the oak chamber at the Leigh; his eyes were brighter than they used to be, and a redness below and in front of the

ear, down towards the chin were the principal changes he perceived at first ; the old man had nearly recovered the use of his paralysed limbs ; he was very glad (indeed when his ordinary manner was taken into consideration, unnaturally glad) to see his son ; he seemed in very high and buoyant spirits too, very unlike his generally quiet ways ; and at the slightest cause the Squire would laugh so long and loud, that by degrees Horace grew frightened, and Mrs. Leigh would give him such terrified looks—he knew not how to answer them back—there was a something very strange about his father—it made their blood run cold.

Old Mr. Leigh would sit and talk—far more than he had ever talked when he was well—in a strange excited way—and his small grey eyes would flash and sparkle fearfully—then he became irascible, the man so quiet and good-tempered of old to every one but Horace, would be enraged and even furious ; using such language as had never passed his lips, at the least disappoint-

ment, at the very slightest opposition—reminding them of Luke.—And yet he had recovered the power of movement, and could even walk, at first with the support of Horace, who almost carried him upon his strong young arm ; then he would walk across the room alone, and Mrs. Leigh would sit and watch his half tottering steps, and spring forward to assist him when she fancied he was falling, for he had now a way of moving which she tremblingly pointed out to Horace when they were for a moment or two alone.

“ Oh, Horace, have you noticed that strange manner of your poor dear father’s, walking and moving in that one sided way, as if one half of his poor head was heavier and weighed him down that way ! oh, my dear boy, this is a terrible visitation ; he is so strange—he frightens me ! and if I try to help him, he who has been throughout our long married life, so kind and tender, how he repulses me ; he says harsh things ; and, Horace, he used an oath—at me—to-

day!" and poor Mrs. Leigh burst into tears; and exhausted by her anxieties, blinded with her tears, she flung her head upon the shoulder of her long neglected son, and sobbed very bitterly.

Horace took her hand; with the gentleness and tenderness of his nature, he soothed, he comforted his mother; the tears came to his own eyes, as he gave her hope that these strange symptoms would pass away—"perhaps it was her fancy;" and kindly whispering everything that was most likely to afford her consolation in the shattered state of her own nerves, which had not recovered the shock of her husband's sudden seizure; he had the happiness of seeing her cheered: by him; and after a long conversation, the most affectionate she had ever had with him, his mother caressingly put back the dark hair from his forehead, and touching it gently with her lips, declared—

"My dear, dear boy—what should I do without you! promise you will not leave me;

you are my comfort. I must give way if you are not here to support me."

Horace was deeply touched—fully rewarded ; he felt his mother loved him now, with that affection he had been yearning for for years. She knew his heart at last—and he was more than satisfied.

When next the physician from a distance, who had been called in as an eminent practitioner, paid the poor squire a visit, Horace detailed all the strange little symptoms that were so alarming to him and Mrs. Leigh ; and was assured that they were but the common symptoms of that terrible disease ; another attack of which might be delayed for months, or might come every moment. The days of the old squire were numbered, or rather he was doomed at no distant time, however uncertain the day and hour might be.

But this was to be a secret from his wife ; she was on no account to know that the fatal sword was suspended by a single hair over her husband's head ; the physician saw

that to tell her that terrible news would totally unfit her for the post of nurse. "His patient's irritability would increase; she must have nerve for that knowledge—and that would be as much as she could bear;" and the good doctor saw such genuine grief and feeling in the young face of Horace, that he shook him by the hand with more than usual friendliness.

And he, poor fellow, had to smooth down his awe-struck face, and learn to feign; no easy task to one whose nature was so upright and true—feign hope and cheerfulness—concealing from his poor mother the fatal tidings of her inevitable and approaching loss.

This should have been a woman's task, this comforting and watching—but Horace performed his painful part as kindly as a woman could have done.

His mother's eyes seemed to be opened now; she could see all that he really was; she had been in sorrow once before, and what comfort had she had from Luke!

“ Stuff, mother ! what’s the use of worrying me ?—how can I help my father’s being ill ?” and kicking a chair impatiently out of his way, he had answered her anxious appeal by banging the door on his way to the stables.

How keenly did she feel the difference now.

Every day and hour brought home to her the knowledge of the feeling heart of her young son ; and every day she leant upon him more, and loved him better.

This feeling that he was of use—*appreciated*—that one idea which makes one work so willingly, reconciled Horace to the dreary life he led ; for now his mother could scarcely bear him out of her sight, or out of call : she was becoming fearfully nervous.

The greatest comforts he had were long and kind letters from Blanche, and now and then a silly but interesting epistle from Fred.

“ My poor old fellow,” wrote he, “ I am

so sorry for you; I shouldn't be able to bear such dismal scenes—I know I shouldn't. But here I am in Town, according to my promise, waiting for you, Horatio. I don't feel, somehow, inclined to go anywhere out of Town, though it is hot enough.

“It would be very dull, only Sir Josiah has business in Town, all about I don't know what, though he often tries to explain to me; only—though I do flatter myself I'm no fool—I can't be expected to understand screws and pumps you know, can I? Well, he stays in Town! and so the ladies are here too, and very kind: otherwise, as the Serpentine looks very cool and tempting these broiling days, I really think it is quite possible I might have been drowned—quite by accident—some day.

“Having nothing to do is the greatest bore in the world; except having too much to do. And so I go and sit with the ladies; and they work, and I talk; and we find it very pleasant, for there isn't another soul in London; and so good-bye, Horatio; I wish

you'd come. I shan't settle accounts, or pay any bills—it is such a bore—I shall leave all that to you. I'm not at all myself without you, so you must not expect amusing letters; I am as stupid as an owl."

"Poor dear Fred! what an affectionate heart you have—and what a head!" thought Horace, smilingly. "I envy your seeing Isabelle day by day, and I—"

But he shook away the thoughts that were coming, and stifled a sigh. He was doing his duty where he was.

Mrs Leigh was in high spirits one day, walking with her son in the garden, having left her poor husband asleep, with one of the servants watching him through the open door, and much refreshed by her exercise, she entered his room with a more cheerful face and step than usual, but she had not taken two steps into the room, when a succession of shrieks, in his mother's well-known voice, made Horace spring from the garden seat, and rush up stairs into the old oak room.

His mother was wringing her hands in helpless anguish; and the poor old squire was sitting there, with his head thrown back, perfectly speechless, and incapable of moving hand or foot: he had just had another fit.

Horace and the servants with difficulty carried him to his own chamber; he was as helpless as if he had been dead; but life was still there; and his eyes had a wilder expression even than before.

Poor Horace had next to tend his mother, whose terror was quite as alarming as her husband's state; and having sent off for advice in more than one direction, he was obliged to nurse both parents now!

The doctors gave the same verdict as before—the next attack would, in all human probability, be the last; for the present, he might recover some share of power of speech and movement, but this stroke was a very severe one; they almost wondered it had not been fatal.

Luke was again summoned, but with his

usual thoughtlessness for others, he had not written what his course was to be, when they determined on going farther than their original destination. Emily wrote home full accounts of all her adventures, but nothing by which they could immediately be traced; and so the letters did not reach them for weeks after they might have done so, and the young couple were as yet in ignorance of the sad news from Leigh.

But now began the real trials of Horace and his mother, for the poor squire was absolutely helpless, and only recovered the use of the faculty of speech to worry them with bitter reproaches for want of attention; a most unjust accusation; and above all he wrung their hearts by being constantly in tears. Poor Mrs. Leigh was in despair; she wrote to Mrs. Vernon, entreating her to come, if she wished to see her brother before he became worse, and she entreated Mrs. Trevor and Blanche to come and help her to nurse her husband. Unfortunately Mrs. Trevor herself was so unwell that she could neither

come herself or spare Blanche from her own bedside.

So Horace was more necessary to his mother now than ever.

Mrs Vernon read the letter entreating her to come to Leigh, with deep and silent sorrow. It is said old people do not feel the losses of this nature as they would if they were younger ; perhaps they show it less, but if we look around us with attentive eyes we must remark they do not long survive the death of one near their own age, if they have cared for them in earnest.

Little inclined to move, and undertake so long a journey, Mrs. Vernon instantly prepared for it ; and hurried on the postboys in her anxiety to reach the Leigh.

The old squire was as usual up, and sitting in his chair by the window ; he was gazing vacantly out upon the sunny lawn, and the old trees, of which he had been so proud ; he felt they would not be his much longer. He had been told that Mrs. Vernon was coming, and the idea greatly excited him.

Horace, who knew how bad every exciting circumstance was for one in his condition, was full of deep anxiety ; and yet they had been obliged to tell him, or the sight of her must have been a shock. It was impossible not to give his only sister the opportunity of seeing him before it was too late ; and yet they had been warned—it might, 'specially if he saw her suddenly, produce some bad effects.

In his thick and scarcely articulate voice, the poor old squire has asked once and again—

“Olympia—is—she coming ? how good,” and then perhaps would end the sentence with reproaches to his most patient and devoted nurses, much too painful to be recorded.

There was a dead silence in the room ; the heat was very great, and it was evident a storm was coming on ; the birds even were silent—when the sick man's face suddenly lighted up.

“ I—I hear—wheels—she is coming,” said he.

Horace and Mrs. Leigh heard nothing, although they listened with strained and painful eagerness.

Afraid he might be too much disappointed Mrs. Leigh declared—

“ It must be fancy—we hear nothing—there are no wheels.”

“ Dolt !” said the good, kind husband of a long life—“ idiot ! I hear the wheels. What, are you deaf, or are you doing it to torment, and grieve and disappoint me ?” and he went on putting himself into a rage so fearful, that his face and head grew crimson with his efforts to speak ; when, as they least expected it, he burst into a flood of tears, sobbing like a young child.

Just then poor Horace really caught the sound of wheels, and hastened out to receive Mrs. Vernon, marvelling that his father had been right—had heard the sound when their ears caught it not.

Mrs. Vernon, with all her strength of

mind, was very pale, and trembled much, as Horace helped her to alight, fatigued with her long journey. He would fain have persuaded her to take a glass of wine before she saw his father, but she was too much agitated to wait; and, supported by Horace, with a step very unlike her usual, firm, elastic tread, she entered the room.

The poor old squire threw a look of triumph at his wife—raised himself more than he had done since his attack—called out aloud —“ I knew it was my sister!” and sank back.

He had been struck again !

CHAPTER XIV.

THERE was now not a shadow of hope that the poor master of the Leigh would ever tread its floors again.

“No hope!” Ah, it was well that Mrs. Vernon, with her strong mind, was there to aid in supporting the feebler spirit of poor Mrs. Leigh, when the truth was carefully broken to her. “No hope!” Who that has ever heard those words of one they love can ever forget the feeling they produce!

The few words he murmured now could not be understood, except by Horace ; his

mother's agitation whenever he attempted to speak, if speaking it could be called, deafened and bewildered her, and Mrs. Vernon was not accustomed to the altered voice of her brother. She was greatly shocked—prayer was her only source of comfort and strength ; it was so terrible to sit and watch that death in life—to know that every limb refused to stir at will—to see the mind so nearly gone from the face she had known from childhood, these were to the sister of the dying man most sad and melancholy tasks. At every moment some little thing brought the fact of his utterly powerless state home to the minds of his affectionate nurses.

He was still placed for some hours on his sofa, but his poor hands lay utterly useless by his side, and this was continually recalled to their remembrance in a most painful manner by his inarticulate words of distress.

Horace bent anxiously down, to catch, if possible, his meaning.

An insect had alighted on his hand, and he had no power to brush it away, not even to stir a finger, and scarcely the articulation to make Horace understand the meaning of his murmurs.

This was indeed sad work, but it did not continue long, for from that last attack—which was indeed the *last*—the poor old Squire of Leigh gradually slumbered and slept his life away.

He did not live to see his fondest wish and hope—Luke and his wife in the old house.

One week from the day of Mrs. Vernon's arrival her brother died.

“Only nine weeks from the first fit,” counted poor Mrs. Leigh in her distress, “and they all told me he might live for months so short, so very short a time—and Luke not here !”

She was in a state of despair, for which her remarkably easy and acquiescent disposition had not prepared either Horace or his aunt, but soft natures like hers give

way more completely than those of sterner mould, and poor Mrs. Leigh shut herself up in the room that held all that remained to her of the husband of her youth, and to all the entreaties of her family opposed a passive resistance, which obliged them to relinquish their endeavours; she never, for the week which elapsed before the funeral array passed from the door, she never left the chamber of the dead.

She scarcely tasted during that week one morsel of solid food, a little tea to moisten her lips was all ; she was indeed a mourner, and for some time poor Horace feared she would have followed her husband even to the grave ; but after a time, by slow degrees, she rallied ; grief is so suited to our mortal state, it seldom kills. She was totally unfit to attend to business ; all that could be done in the unfortunate absence of Luke was done by Horace, and the affection which had long existed between him and his aunt was drawn closer by every act of his, so feeling, so kind, and so judicious

was his conduct ; whilst his mother learnt in that time of her bitter anguish, to know his value more than she had had time or occasion to feel it, in his whole life before.

Poor Mrs. Vernon's powerful mind had not sustained her under this stroke as it might have been supposed it would—her brother had only the claim of kindred to her affection—they had been through their long lives without one mutual opinion or pursuit ; they had nothing in common but their race.—Indeed she had a contempt for his narrow-mind, and very limited ideas—his conduct to Horace had greatly weakened the regard that still remained between them, and yet she felt his loss nearly as much as the gentle and devoted Mrs. Leigh.

She sometimes fancied her own nerves were shattered by the event that had just occurred ; for all unused to foolish weaknesses of any kind, do what she would, one terrible idea, would by day, and even more by

night, present itself to her imagination—she fancied she had killed her brother.

That by the shock of her coming she had hastened, *indeed caused* his death, and as she was one of those who know that every hour for repentance is beyond price to those who may not have felt its awful necessity before their latter days, she felt she might have cut short his life—it was a very terrible idea, and one that preyed upon her mind for very long—no efforts of her own could blot out the thought that she had killed her brother.

This threw her into a nervous and excited state very unlike her own calm frame of mind; and shut up in a still and silent country house with two mourners, each brooding over their own griefs alike yet different—poor Horace had no pleasant task.

It was a singular circumstance, that whilst the son the Squire had always treated so harshly—soothed his dying bed by every womanly tenderness—the son he loved, his

idol—was not there, not near him—was away—amusing himself—in ignorance of his illness, in ignorance of his death—for at the very hour he breathed his last Luke and his wife were in the highest spirits, and at a ball.

There is something beyond measure revolting to the feelings in the knowledge, that we have been gay and happy—laughing and dancing at the very day and hour in which one we have loved was *dying* ; that we have been talking of them, laughing about them, perhaps even merrily drinking their health when they were *dead*—and yet when families are parted far and wide these wretched things will happen.

Luke Leigh had been so thoroughly annoyed, that before they moved again from Weisbaden he had secured another courier, not to be compared in usefulness to the one he had sent away, but still a very great comfort.

One day as they were walking in the gardens, after having for the hundredth

time, looked into those extraordinary caldrons of nature's cookery—the greatest wonder of which, is that they always furnish the *same* mixture, no one of the ingredients ever seeming to fail in its due proportion—they were really delighted to meet a party of acquaintance : in that foreign land, they were instantly promoted into friends. Having kept shyly aloof from strangers, whatever their country might be, the seeing people who knew them, and High Elms, and Mrs. Vernon, who could give the last intelligence of Mr. Langton and Charlotte and Carlo, was truly delightful. And they agreed to dine together every day; and the young Leighs were perfectly happy to keep entirely apart from every one, they did not know ; and yet enjoy some human society.

Their old friends were of a very different stamp, it may be even, that the young lady of the party, went into the opposite extreme of making acquaintance, with everyone she met, but truly she amused herself

which the Leighs most certainly did not. Miss Langstone was clever, and thought herself so, but she had a way of entering into violent arguments upon all sorts of subjects with perfect strangers, which sometimes ended in her finding herself in a scrape. Scarcely a week before her meeting with her old friend Emily, she had harangued for a whole day against the Roman Catholics, with their pomps and vanities, in no measured terms, to a very interesting and elegant English lady, who bore it in quietness and peace, until provoked beyond measure, she was obliged to silence her triumphant antagonist by gently observing :

“ *I am a Roman Catholic.*”

Miss Langstone who piqued herself upon being a linguist, also told Emily she had been not a little annoyed by being informed by a moustachoeed German count, to whom she had made herself very agreeable.

“ That he should have known any where, that she was English—by her French !”

These two little occurrences rather tended

to silence her extreme vivacity, and she became very useful to Emily, on many occasions ; furnishing her often with speeches and amusements.

Truly she *might* have been known as English, by her French, for she surprised a Hungarian Baron, by declaring that one must have in England—

“ *Un mille livres par an—ou on ne pouvait pas—avoir le monde a diner.*”

The polite Hungarian was obliged to smother his astonishment at any body's wishing to have this habitable globe to dinner, by swallowing, in haste, another glass of Rudesheimer.

Miss Langstone was a specimen of one class of English travellers, as the young Leighs were of another.

Luke had been very good tempered for some time, and had actually been induced to follow the party of his old acquaintance much farther than he had any intention of doing ; he quite forgot to mention their change of plans, and so their letters did

not reach them till their return to Frankfort after a fortnight's stay in Vienna.

Luke had complained, in his usual coarse manner, and had devoted all the foreign posts to all sorts of destruction, quite forgetting that the whole fault of the matter, rested in his own negligence—it is so very pleasant to throw the blame upon any person or anything, rather than ourselves!

Another English party, who were connexions of the Langstones, were in similar trouble, they had left young children at home, and could hear no tidings whatever of them, which was of course a real matter of anxiety and distress ; they were however suddenly relieved by a letter from a friend who told them that on applying to their house in Somersetshire, for their present address, the old housekeeper, upon whom devolved the task of writing to them regularly, had declared that she had directed all the letters she had written to Boulogne. Knowing this to be wrong al-

together, the lady had suggested Cologne, at which the old housekeeper had said—

“ Ah ! Cologne, so it was—but Boulogne, or Cologne don’t signify, do it ma’am, it is all the same in the end !”

This eclaircissement was a great relief to the anxious parents, but brought no comfort to Luke, as he knew that his not getting his letters could be owing to no mistake of other people, though he would not allow it could be attributed to his own.

At Frankfort, however, they found a huge packet lying at their banker’s, and whilst Emily was rejoicing over some good news from home, Luke was silently reading an account of the illness and death of his father.

“ Poor Horace !” ejaculated he, “ I am glad I was out of that.”

And this was his first idea, his mental epitaph upon the most indulgent parent that ever breathed.

The next was, that he was master of the Leigh ; and then, particularly when he saw

poor Emily's feelings of genuine sorrow and dismay, little as she had known her father-in-law, *then* he began to feel a touch of natural grief, and still led by Emily's burst of sorrowful compassion, he actually thought of and pitied his poor mother as he read over the affecting and true picture, Horace drew of her despair.

Sweet Emily Leigh strove in her kindest and gentlest way, to soothe her husband, judging by her own shocked feelings what his must be, (what they might have been indeed, but were not;) and anxious, all thoughtless, as she was, to be of some use and comfort to Mrs. Leigh in her desolate and widowed state, she hurried Luke in all the preparations for their return, and so they turned their steps homewards, under circumstances of mourning which they little dreamt of when they left England in all the freshness of their bridal array.

What Mrs. Leigh felt in her now desolate room at the old house, when the strange men came to profane with their touch the

sad resting place of her husband ; what she felt when they had carried it forth, and she was left there *alone*, none but a widow indeed, as she was, could describe ; the night before the funeral the coffin was taken away, she had sat and watched it till nature, and even reason seemed about to fail together ; but nothing would induce her to take any composing medicine ; nothing would induce her to remain one instant separated from all that remained to her of long years of peaceful happiness, whilst he was still within the old walls of his home. No sooner had the strangers, whose presence revolted her beyond all bearing, left the gilded and ornamented coffin in its destined place for the night, that it might be ready for the morning, which was to be so terrible to her, than Mrs. Leigh descended to the dining-room where it was laid ; there in the scene of so many happy and merry hours, the very room seemed ringing still with his hearty and good-tempered laugh, there, locking the door, refusing the

passionate and tearful entreaties of Horace and Mrs. Vernon to be allowed to bear her company ; there with her bible, the one that had been his, with that one only comforter, did the widowed Mrs. Leigh keep watch.

In every-day life so easy, so quiet, so apparently calm and feelingless, who would have suspected her of this passionate love for the sad remains of the old master of the Leigh ? but he had been good and kind to her ; he was the husband of her youth, the cheerful partner of a long life of calm and uneventful happiness ; never had a word of anger or recrimination passed between them, his wish was hers—she had vegetated there with a peace and quietness rarely allotted to any in this life of care and toil—he had done everything—thought of everything, she had been a mere cipher in her own home ; but that she liked, and now so suddenly, so very suddenly, she had lost her happiness, her stay, her all.

She had not closed her eyes even for an

instant, when the busy sounds outside, told her, in language not to be mistaken, that the hour was come when she must take a last farewell of all she held so dear.

She started and uttered a faint scream as a knock, gentle and low as it was, came to the door ; it was poor Horace entreating for admission—which she again refused—he told her in a voice of deep emotion, that “ *She must soon leave the room.*”

There was a pause, and then she came close up to the door, and whispered in a choked, unnatural tone he scarcely knew for hers—

“ Wait half an hour, Horace, I must and will have one half hour more—and then—take care that no one is in the way—let me see no one I implore—send them all—all—away—then come for me, Horace, and I will—*leave—him—*”

He was glad to hear his mother burst into a flood of tears, they were the first that she had shed.

What passed in that sad half-hour was

never known ; there was no sound in that chamber of the dead.

But when the time had elapsed, Horace again made known his presence—not a creature was in her way.—After a few moments of terrible suspense to him, for his mother made no answer, at last he heard her step. She opened the door, and supported by Horace she tottered up to her own room ;—hastily entering without a word—she just pressed the kind hand of her son, and again locked herself in.

Flinging herself upon her knees, she remained in that position, though her thoughts were too confused to pray. The sounds below almost maddened her.

The carriages, with those who were to attend the funeral, began to arrive—with sounds which till that day had been signals of pleasantness and mirth.

Then there came one with a heavier, a different noise of wheels—and she guessed what that was ; then strange, heavy steps, made heavy by a burden, came down the

echoing hall; and she heard them slowly and with muttered words of caution descend the steps. She would have given worlds to shut out these horrible though slight indications of what was doing below. She might so easily have ceased to listen, but she was fascinated; and with starting eyes, and ears whose nerves were fearfully excited, with hands so tightly clasped, that unconsciously the nails were wounding her; she listened on. By some mismanagement the coffin jarred against the corner of the porch. She knew what it must be—and clasping her hands upon her eyes, she shrieked aloud; as if the jar had power to harm the cold and senseless form within! It was a horrible aggravation of her anguish, that little accident. Her senses were a thousand-fold more acute that day than they had ever been—and each added to her sufferings.

She heard the grating, scraping sound when the narrow couch of the poor old squire was placed within the hearse; (her room was just over the porch), and she heard

the door of it shut to with a sharp bang, which struck her heart as if it had been a blow.

Then with its many horses, whose footsteps creaked strangely in the gravel, so many steps at once, the hearse moved on.

Poor Mrs. Leigh gave a low cry ; and then it stopped, waiting for the carriages.

In silence and with noiseless steps the first party passed down the hall, and entered the mourning coach. Tottering in some degree under the influence of his sincere affliction, she still knew the footsteps of her son, and a deeper contraction of anguish passed over her sorrow-stricken face.

Then came the common, every-day, society like sounds of carriages, and doors shutting, and wheels ; the frequent pauses maddened her ; but at last they all, all drove away.

From where she sat, such was the nature of the ground about the Leigh, that she must see the funeral procession wind up the long, steep hill, on towards the church ; and she sat there with tearless and widely dilated

eyes, watching till it should come out from the shelter of the trees.

It came creeping so heavily along—the hearse and its train.

She sat and looked—adding to her distress by every second of time ; feeling more and more this terrible proof of the reality of all which had more than once appeared to her like a painful nightmare—yet she gazed on—as if it had been a pageant in which she had no personal interest whatever.

The long procession moved very slowly on ; and when the hearse, with its precious freight, passed out of sight, bearing it on towards its final resting-place, a shiver ran throughout her frame : but she still watched.

One by one the mourning coaches past on over the brow of the steep hill, showing themselves, as that tall hearse, with all its nodding plumes, had done ; distinctly drawn in black against the sunny sky. Then came the carriages of friends, with their slow pace, so different now to what it had

had been ;—and then the last of them passed out of sight.

Then Mrs. Leigh felt that all was indeed over; the loss was now too certain and too real; the unnatural tension of her nerves gave way, and she flung herself in an agony of tears upon her bed. Her face and hands were met by a strange feeling substance, the touch of which gave her another shock: she had buried her face unwittingly in the deep crape of her fresh widow's weeds.

The sight of those sad habiliments, sacred to such a loss as hers, and to that only, filled up the measure of her grief; and giving no answer through the day to all the anxious comers to that chamber, with its barred door, the widow mourned so deeply, and with such a bitter grief, it was a wonder that she could endure, unused to anguish as she was, such new and terrible emotion.

Mrs. Vernon had her share of sorrow too, but she was more composed, her love

for Horace too, led her to exert herself to overcome her own morbid impressions, and so, slowly and wearily the days moved on, and yet—no news of Luke.

One trial was still in store : those horrible letters of condolence coming day by day perhaps for weeks, opening the wounds sorrow has made—afresh ;—letters, some full of feeling, and with a sense of real religion, leading the sufferer by some well-timed thought to the one source of comfort—others—mere conventional and lifeless forms, written without a feeling—to be answered with so many painful ones !—Such sympathy adds to the anguish that it was meant to soothe.

Letters from every one, but none as yet from Luke ; except very happy ones full of accounts of gay and pleasant things coming in painful contrast to the sad realities at Leigh.

Letters from gentle Frederick Keane, declaring himself a “ victim ” “ why did not

Horace come now that the worst was over." Describing the loneliness of his long days—complaining he had read all the new novels, and as many old as he could get—"what *was* he to do next he didn't know!—Horace must tell him ;—Horace *must come*."

Poor fellow, he was tied to the oar, bound by those ties of duty and affection which had no common power over his grateful heart—to stay and comfort his mother, and his aunt.

Then at last came tidings of Luke from Frankfort ; he had returned from his trip to Vienna, he had heard the news, and he was coming home ; he hoped his brother would be there on his arrival ; there would be much to settle, and arrange, money matters without end *he* never understood such things, they were a bore to him—Horace was so clever, he *must* stay at the Leigh till all was settled—he hoped his brother would do that whatever his plans now might be—*he* couldn't manage without Horace.

Selfish in their many differing ways, but selfish all.—And the one kind heart and noble spirit amongst them, he must bear and suffer—help and give up.—Horace began to feel worn out with all these things—he wanted change and cheerfulness—he wanted rest from griefs and worries; he had a strange presentiment of evil; though he did not see the cloud he felt the chill, already, of its coming.

Frederick Keane's epistles were always a source of interest to him, because they always mentioned some of the Walgrave family. Fred now spent part of almost every day with them, for they were still in town; Sir Josiah's complicated business kept them there. Sometimes Fred's unconnected epistles would be full of admiration of that "pretty creature Louisa Walgrave," and Horace would read them with a smile; *that* really would be very pleasant, another link in the chain that bound him and his friend together.—Then

the next day would bring a different strain of sentiment from Fred's uncertain pen; praises of Isabelle, and Horace, with his firm conviction of her love for him, would smile in calm superiority to his affectionate but shallow friend, and wonder Fred dared to lift his eyes to *her*.

One day Horace perused quite a pathetic letter from his friend and pet.

"If you don't come, Horatio, I am so dull alone, I can't say what may happen—something dreadful—I may perhaps get married—who can tell—don't be astonished if I do that's all."

Horace laughed out—*he* had not dared to ask a Walgrave, brought up as they had been, to share his income and his prospects;—and Fred could fancy Louisa would accept him! how absurd.

Another letter came from Fred, and Horace opened it with a sarcastic smile.—Suddenly the colour faded from his face—the smile departed from his lips—had he

seen a spirit from another world, such might have been his look of horror and surprise—he scarcely could believe he read aright,—Isabelle Walgrave had accepted Frederick Keane.

THE END OF VOL. I.





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